CURRENT NOTES

Guiding Atari Owners in the World of Computing

February '93
Vol. 13, No. 1
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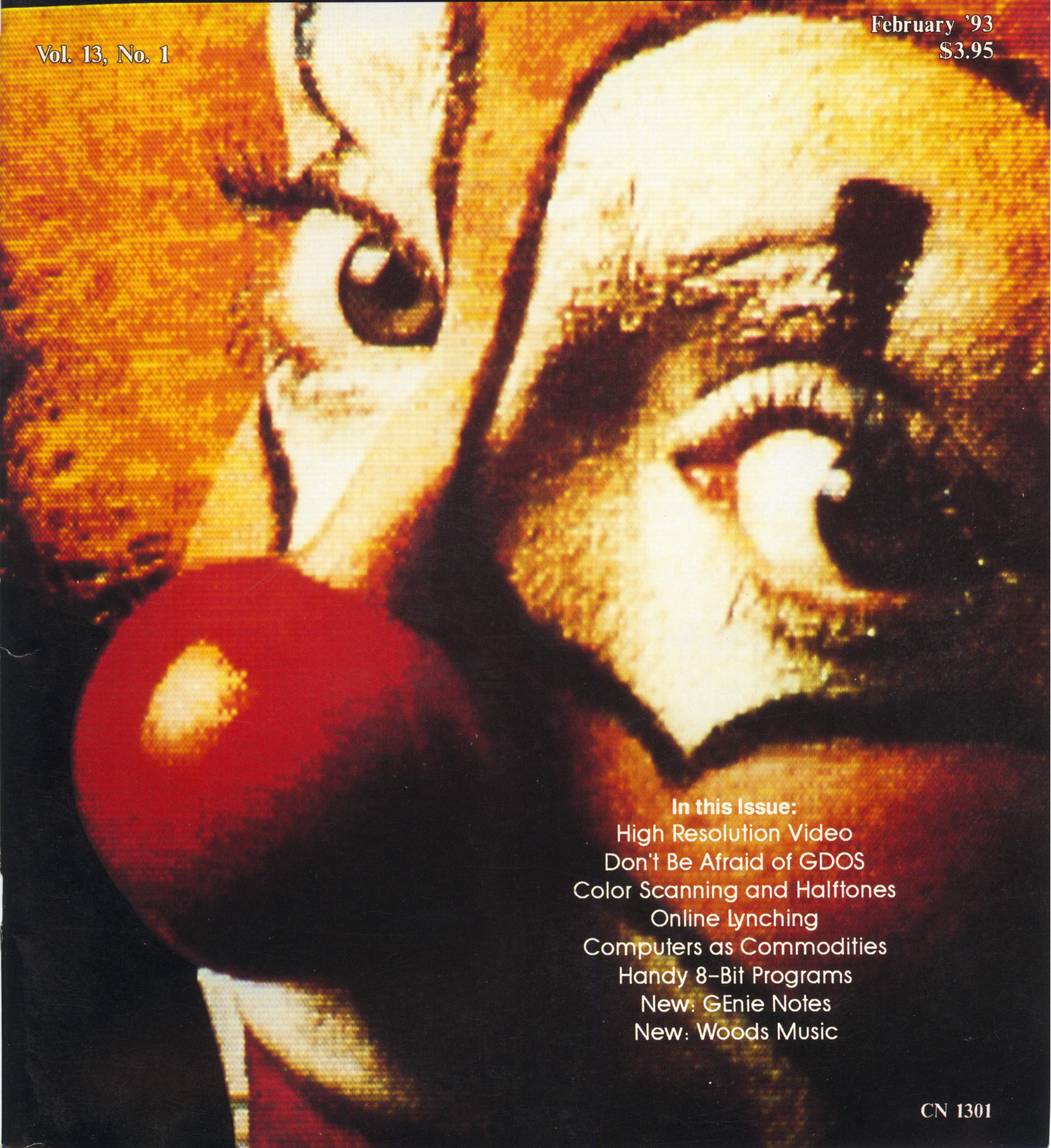

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CN 1301

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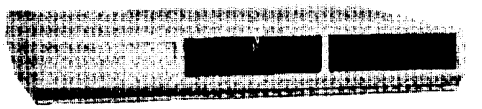

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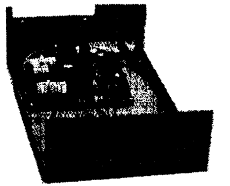
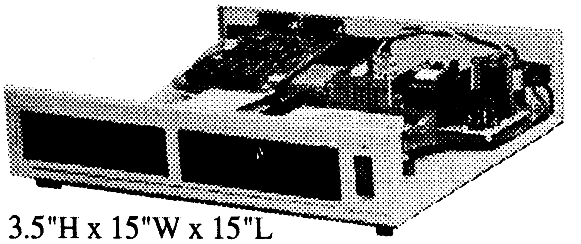


Case B: our shoebox Case $89



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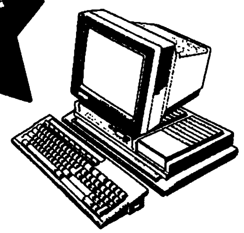

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The cover: Have you seen this clown face before? It is one of the finer examples of Atari art. With the arrival of true color on the Falcon or on the TT with 3rd–party cards, Atari art is, once more, competitive with anything on the market. Photo by Mik e Heininger, (c) 1993.

MOVING?

Don't forget to send in a change of address notice if you are moving. *Current Notes* is distributed via second class US mail. The post office does not forward second class publications; they throw them away.

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Publisher 2 can be enhanced with many new fonts, and Andrzej begins a series of articles that explain how. But first, you will need a practical introduction to GDOS.

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Richard discloses some new updates to ST ZIP and discusses another file compression algorithm: ST ZOO.

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From the Editor's Desk

by Joe Waters

Where Will We Be in '93?

1992 was not a good year. It was not a good year for *Current Notes*, not for Atari, not for IBM, not for the computer industry, not for U.S. industry, not for the country. But with each new year comes a new beginning, a hope for a brighter, more prosperous future. The country has a young, dynamic new president, U.S. industry is showing signs of awakening, the computer industry continues to create and absorb fantastic new technologies, IBM will be completing its downsizing, and Atari has its new Falcon. That brings us back down to *Current Notes*. What does *CN* have to signal that 1993 might be a better year?

Taking Stock

Well, we have Joyce and myself, a little older, a little more worn out, maybe a little wiser (maybe not), but still plugging away trying to keep *Current Notes* going for yet another, our tenth, year. In the early years, I was able to do it all. But as we grew, that became more and more difficult. Joyce, who, by the way, was never a computer fanatic, now handles all the finances, the advertisers, the stores, communications with the printer, and the taxes. She also fills all the disk orders and does the final editing on each issue. Without her aid, *CN* would immediately collapse, so be nice to her when you talk to her on the phone. I recruit and work with the authors, do all the layout and desktop publishing, maintain the subscriber and store databases, and build and maintain, the public domain library. We both work on *CN* in addition to other jobs, mine with the government and Joyce as Boy Scout District Commissioner.

In Search of Excellence

Other critical assets *CN* offers our readers are dependability and a committment to integrity and excellence. Over this past decade there have been a lot of changes in the Atari market and through it all, *Current Notes* has reported these events (and adapted to them), bringing to our readers, month after month (without *ever* missing a single issue) all the latest Atari news.

Longtime subscribers are well aware of the many changes in *CN* appearance and content that have occurred over the years. Every year I have continuously strived to make *CN* more professional and more valuable to our readers. 1993 will be no exception. Last year, I asked our authors to focus more on helping our readers "get more out of their investments." What I stated in early 1992 is equally true today.

"Some day, many of you will purchase another computer. It may be the new TT or another Atari model. Or, it may be an entirely different brand and system. In the meantime, you have already purchased your Atari computer. Now, what do you do with it? I will encourage *CN* authors to tackle that question."

Our writers responded quite well to my request. Review the contents of *CN* for 1992 (on page 71) and you see what an excellent job they did. Nearly one-quarter of our output last year was tutorials designed to help you master computing on your Atari.

Editorial Themes for '93

We will continue that theme for yet another year, placing even more emphasis on using your (Atari) computer. In this bewildering computer market, no one really knows how Atari Corporation will fare. At the moment, it looks like Jack Tramiel, after years of waging "Business as War" and fighting each battle tenaciously, has finally vanquished all enemies. Everyone who has dealt with Atari is in full retreat: their programmers, engineers, developers, suppliers and dealers, even many of their faithful customers; none want anything more to do with this company. The battles have been won, but I don't know about the war, since most of the "enemy" seemed to be the very people Atari needs to succeed in the computer marketplace.

But perhaps the Falcon will change all that. When Atari finally does get the Falcon rolling off the production line and sailing into America, it ought to, at least, be able to surprise its competition; no other computer manufacturer, or the public for that matter, seems to be aware that Atari still exists.

But whether or not Atari Corp. succeeds does not alter the fact that we already own these computers and we want to get better use out of them. We want to continue to learn more about the wonders of computing, for much of what we learn with our Atari computer will carry over into our next computer, whatever brand it may be. So, for 1993, you will see *CN* writers continue that trend of trying to help you understand this marvelous, exciting, and confusing technology.

We will intentionally not report the details of all the latest intrigues in the inner sanctums of the Atari community, the rumors, charges and countercharges, for all of that matters not to most users. We will report on new products and how to use both old and new products.

We will also report even more on the world of telecommunications. I believe the networking of the world, connecting your home computer to an electronic universe, will be as much a revolution in the 1990s as personal computers were in the 1980s. *Current Notes* will follow this frontier and keep you abreast of all these pioneering efforts.

The Secret Ingredient: Our Writers

And finally, as always, the greatest strength CN offers subscribers is the quality of our authors. They are all dedicated Atari owners who love their machines and want to help others enjoy the Atari experience. And, of course, we value very highly their ability to translate, sometimes complex and confusing, subjects into prose that ordinary people can understand.

The core of the CN staff has been with us for quite awhile, but every year there usually is a little change. Last year, as you may recall, we bid farewell to Ben Poehland and welcomed Rick Reaser as the new 8-bit editor. This year, I am sad to say, Frank Sommers has decided to step down as ST Editor. Frank has been doing more traveling of late and, because he was going to be away so much, felt it was time to pass the baton on to someone else. For the moment, I will take over that job. (Anyone interested? Contact me.)

We also will bid a fond farewell to Mike Heininger. Mike eloquently explains his departure (see the Letters to the Editor) and represents, I fear, a significant percentage of what used to be a strong Atari family. We wish him all the best. Mike, among other things, was the photographer who provided *CN* with such fascinating color covers. We will now need more photos for possible *CN* covers. Any creative photographers out there?

As we start the new year with this issue, I would like to introduce some new colleagues who will be joining the CN staff. For quite awhile I have been interested in expanding our music coverage. The Atari is an excellent computer for a musician, professional or amateur, and the Falcon will only increase Atari's appeal to the music world. Enter Gary Woods with his new column, "Woods Music." Gary, who you will see has some impressive credentials, will be a welcome addition to the music fans in the audience.

We are also starting a new column focusing on the GEnie telecommunications service. Lou Rocha, a high school principal who is also a GEnie sysop from Canada, brings us his first installment including several interesting features. GEnie users should feel free to give Lou their comments directly. In future issues, look for expanded coverage on CompuServe and on the Internet.

Well, what else do we have in this issue? Dave Troy presents an excellent discussion of high resolution video and Dave Barkin explains color and halftone scanning. Both articles will whet the appetite of those who really want to make their systems state-of-the-art. Andrzej Wrotniak begins a series explaining the dreaded GDOS while Dave Small alerts us to some of the sorrier aspects of telecomputing. There's much more in this issue; but I'll have to leave that for you to discover.

Is that enough for us to have a brighter 1993. I don't know. I hope so. If you like *CN* and want us to continue, spread the word. After all, as a magazine, we need subscribers to justify our existence. If the subscriber base dwindles away, so will we.

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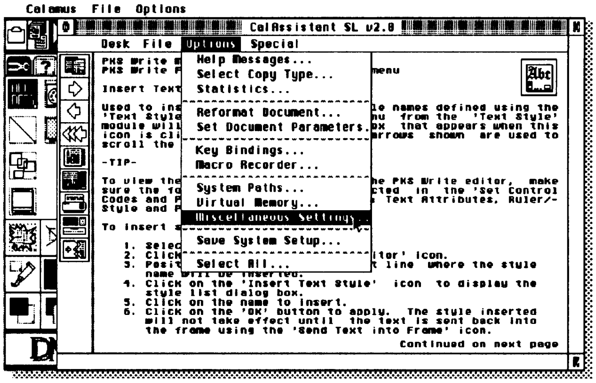

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Letters to the Editor

Flopticals Are a Good Value

Dear CN,

This letter is in response to David Troy's article in his Dec. 92/Jan. 93 article comparing Floptical drives to Syquest cartridge drives. There are several things I'd like to point out:

1. We're selling Floptical disks priced at $19.95 (or $0.95 per MB), and for $16.95 in larger quantities (or $0.81 per MB). That makes the choice of Flopticals that much more attractive; in fact, I'd say that Flopticals are a pretty good value. If you'll recall, Syquest cartridges went down in price significantly from their first release; we can expect to see the same in the Floptical market. According to an article by John Nagy in *AtariUser* (November 1992), some industry officials expect Floptical disk prices to drop steadily in the upcoming year to 1/4 of their current prices.

2. Yes, Floptical drives may be slower than Syquest drives, but I feel users should seriously think about something. Is saving a few seconds more to run a program on a Floptical worth sacrificing all the other benefits of the Floptical drives? Man, people wait longer for a page to print out of their laser printer. And imagine all the neat things you can buy for the $300 you save buying a Floptical drive instead of a Syquest (such as an accelerator that will SAVE you many MORE seconds using your ST than the few seconds you lose by using a Floptical drive). And that doesn't include the savings in buying the media in the future.

3. Dave says that comparing a Floptical drive to a 1.44 MB floppy seems kind of lame and that they're loud, slow, and incompatible with many programs. But his basis for this argument is weak at best. According to an individual I spoke with, it is possible for a program to copy a 1.44 MB floppy from one disk to another using a Floptical drive. Slow? Read/writing 1.44 MB/720K floppies is actually faster using the Floptical drive compared to a standard floppy drive.

Also, what if someone has an older ST that doesn't support 1.44 MB drives? I'd say it's lame to force them to spend extra money (about $150 the last time I looked) to upgrade their ST with TOS 2.06 just to use 1.44 MB floppies. As to being incompatible with "many programs," I ask such as what? Spectre doesn't qualify as "many." And regarding Floptical drives not working with disks that have copy protection, well, the Floptical drive isn't normally used as a primary disk drive. And I don't realistically expect to see anything for the ST released on 1.44 MB/21 MB disks that would require the drive to be used as a primary unit. Therefore, Dave's arguments are only speculative.

Other than that, Dave's article was fairly accurate and provided a lot of good information and ideas about backing up users' software. To sum up, Floptical drives are economical, relatively fast, and compatible with 1.44MB/720K disks (reading them faster than floppy drives, in fact). And it's *much* more convenient traveling with two 3.5" disks rather than a large bulky Syquest cartridge (that may drop and break). I have Floptical drives hooked up to my ST systems and they run just great.

Finally, just so everyone knows, I sell Floptical drives through Purple Mountain Computers, just as David Troy sells them through Toad Computers. We also sell other hard drives/Syquest drives, so we're both equally biased. Before you turn away from a viable and rather incredible drive, take a look at one yourself, or give me a call at 206-399-8700 at Purple Mountain Computers.

Oscar Steele
Purple Mountain Computers, Inc.

Democracy Leads to Freedom

To The Editor,

I'd like to take this opportunity to comment on the Dec/Jan remarks of David Small.

#1 Supporting the *military.* In a democracy there is no such thing as a separate *military.* The military is simply an extension of the will of the people made manifest by their government. Surely if there was a separate military with a separate motivation we would no longer be a democracy at all. There is more than a semantic difference in the support of people in the military and the *idea of a military.* This leads us to ask and define just what is Mr. Small's definition of freedom? Is freedom the right to agree with everyone else? A rather shallow definition at best.

#2 Mr. Small salutes the returning veterans of Desert Storm. I agree with this salute but for different reasons. When Saddam Hussein first occupied Kuwait, President Bush informed the American people that he and he alone had the right to initiate war. Do we really need this kind of leadership, especially so since there would be no Saddam Hussein without the aid we provided during his attack on Iran. In a democracy, government ***has the duty to explain the actions that put its citizens in harm's way. That to ask American citizens to die in war, it has to be more than a reflection of big power politics.*** This brings us to the lessons of the Vietnam war. It was these lessons which forced President Bush to take the question of war and peace before the Congress and the People.

The war in Vietnam was launched on lies and continued on lies. Anyone who has studied the issues, from the 1954 Geneva treaty to the phony Tonkin Gulf attacks knows this. The men who died in Vietnam did, indeed, die in vain if it was fought to prevent Thailand and Indonesia from being "lost." As if one can "lose" a country. I personally do not take the view that the war in Vietnam was *wrong* because we could not win it; my view is that the war in Vietnam was ***wrong, period.*** The best local allies we could come up with were Hitler-loving collaborators of French colonialism.

I opposed our military intervention in Iraq, not because I thought Saddam Hussein was such a nice guy but rather I didn't think the Sultanate of Kuwait was worth one American life. But at least, and this is important, the issue was discussed, openly and democratically in a free society. It was this right that was won in Vietnam. What, after all, is more important in a democracy than war and peace? Is freedom the right to go to slaughter without even knowing why? I'm actually surprised at Mr. Small, who has in the past written so thoughtfully about the government destroying the life and business of someone who wrote a game about "hacking." What does he think the government did to the anti-war protesters? How did the government acquire this wonderful habit of ignoring law? Does Mr. Small believe that law can be ignored selectively? If one wants to think about people in the military than let me just say that the most moving spectacle I was ever involved with in my life was when thousands of Vietnam Vets came to the White House and tossed thousands of medals over the fence onto the white house lawn as a protest against the war. Are these people the complainers and carpers who existed, to quote Mr. Small, "even in Benjamin Franklin's time?"

Perhaps they are, for in Benjamin Franklin's time the carpers and complainers bore such names as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and Sam Adams. But they weren't living in a democracy, they had to make one. Later on in American History, these complainers were called abolitionists and among them were Abraham Lincoln and U.S. Grant. It is the real exercise of freedom that made and makes America great, not some mindless salute to the *idea of a military or an undefined freedom.* Nor is it the justification of old mistakes with new reasons invented 20 years after the events.

I opposed our support of Saddam Hussein during the eighties but I find it strange that Mr. Small seems to be saying that the use of poison gas and terror bombing was *good* when used against Iran and *bad* when used against Kuwait. At the time of the Iranian hostage crisis I felt that we should arrest the Iranian UN delegation and to h--- with what the world thought but does that mean that I should, five years later, support Iraq's unjustified invasion, use of terror and violation of international treaty's banning poison gas because I don't (and still don't) like Iran? And most of all does it mean that I should applaud the executive branch of the government violating US law and international law to support a pack of mercenary terrorists in Nicaragua? Either a democracy is a democracy or it isn't. One cannot be a little bit pregnant. A computer programmer should be able to recognize Orwellian logic when he sees it. This is not what freedom means to me. Mr. Small usually makes a lot of sense but, in this case, he allows the *idea of patriotism to make some very unpatriotic remarks.*

We won the cold war, but it was not the 101st airborne that smashed into Moscow, it was the idea of democracy, it was the idea of freedom. The cold warriors did not bring down the Soviet Union, they, in fact, prolonged this war by adapting Stalinist methods.

It ill behooves us to forget these lessons.

David Barkin
New York, NY

Tired of Making Excuses

Dear Joe,

After a couple of months of deep thought (impressive preface, huh?), I'm resigning as columnist and photographer for *Current Notes*. Although I still cherish my Atari ST system and intend to use it indefinitely, Atari's declining presence finally has killed my interest in writing about its products.

I regret withdrawing from the impressive cadre of iconoclastic authorities that so distinguish *Current Notes*. But I don't deserve riding any farther after my production has ended. When three recent developments did not inspire articles from me, I knew my *CN* time was up. The developments were a new game, Air Warrior dropping Atari, and WACUG trying to survive by expanding beyond Atari.

The game came just before Christmas—yes, I actually bought another ST game, *International Sports Competition*, because it featured show horse jumping, which finally got my daughters interested in a computer game.

About the same time Kesmai announced it soon no longer would support either Atari or the Macintosh monochrome on GEnie's *Air Warrior*. Instead, Kesmai has expanded IBM-compatible support by selling *Air Warrior* in stores as a Super VGA version, and still will support Mac color and Amiga; all three versions naturally continue on-line in GEnie in the ultimate national computer competition.

And WACUG—with only about a dozen survivors—decided to become the Woodbridge Area Computer Users Group instead of the Woodbridge Atari Computer Users Group because most of its few remaining members long ago had at least gone to dual IBM-compatible use anyway.

Normally, each event would inspire insightful articles for *CN*. But, sadly enough, I guess I just don't care enough anymore. Burnout? Not really. Like so many Atarians, I'm simply tired of making excuses for the product. It's no fun documenting the Cherokees' trail of tears or the demise of Tucker autos or the surrender of Beta videotapes.

I've always considered *Current Notes* the class of Atarian counsel. Sometime I may revive enough to write something for you, but not in the near future. Also gone is my enthusiasm for creating color photo covers for a product as elusive as Atari.

For a truly remarkable system in its day, the Atari ST always will have my gratitude. Likewise, my heartfelt thanks to the dedicated programmers and third-party developers, and to fellow enthusiasts so remarkably represented by *Current Notes*. But it's time to go on to other things.

As we discussed before, I hope, somehow, *Current Notes* can expand into some IBM-compatible support that will expand its subscriber base while still supporting whatever Atari user base remains. All Atari users should be forever grateful to you, Frank Sommers, David Troy, Dave Small, John Barnes, L&Y, Joppa, Richard Gunter, Andrzej Wrotniak, and a few others who from the beginning have generously provided the expertise and camaraderie that have made the Atari community special in spite of Atari's vicissitudes. May you all prosper in these very difficult times!

Mike Heininger
Woodbridge,VA

The ULTIMATE Letter

Friends,

There's one small thing that sort of irks me. That is the authors of programs who insist on calling them ULTIMATE something or other. In most cases, they turn out to be anything but ULTIMATE since they often release later improved versions, or someone else comes out with a superior program accomplishing the same or similar results.

No doubt every programmer is proud of his or her work. I have no quarrel with that attitude; I think they deserve a lot of credit. But, to claim ULTIMATE status about most anything nowadays is very risky, particularly in the computer industry, which is making today's programs and equipment obsolete within a very short time through the use of new technology.

Thanks for the fine work you are doing.

Ray Arthur
San Jose, CA

Friday Night Special Edition Real Time Conference

Dateline Atari! with Bob Brodie

Host - Lou Rocha

Friday, Jan. 8th, 1993

[Note: to save space, the moderator's comments introducing each questioner have, generally, been eliminated. Questions are in italics; Bob Brodie's response is in regular print. –JW]

‹[Lou] ST.LOU›

Happy New Year to all our GEnie members! Welcome to the first 1993 installment of Dateline Atari! with Bob Brodie. Bob is typing at us from Sunnyvale, the home of Atari Corp. and we expect to hear all the latest developments, especially with regard to the Falcon and its software-in-progress.

This week we saw a post from John Towns that SpeedoGDOS was very, very close. There was also a later comment that it will be sold due to licensing fees. Let's start there... Bob, what is the status of SpeedoGDOS?

‹BOB-BRODIE›

Good evening, and a Happy New Year to one and all! I hope that the holidays were enjoyable for everyone. I know that I enjoyed the time that I spent with my family in the two weeks of vacation time that I had over the Christmas holidays.

Let's get started and talk Atari!!

First I'd like to give some status reports on some projects that we're working on here at Atari. **MultiTOS** has a recent beta version go out to our developers just before Christmas. This version appears to be working quite well, although not perfect. (I found a bug today, and got it fixed!!). We're now focusing on an installation program for MultiTOS, which was presented to me for evaluation yesterday. You'll be pleased to know that the entire package fits on a single 1.44 meg floppy. At this point in time we're planning on allowing ALL Atari 68000 computers to be able to run MultiTOS. There was some discussion that we might compile MultiTOS in such a fashion that only users with 68030 boards, TT030s, or Atari Falcon030s would be able to use MultiTOS. In speaking to the TOS group, they feel confident that they will have a shippable version of MultiTOS next week. Still to be decided is how we are going to distribute MultiTOS to our customers. Once that decision is made, we'll let you know via an announcement here on GEnie, and in Atari Explorer Online Magazine.

SpeedoGDOS, our scalable font replacement for GDOS/FontGDOS/FSM GDOS is just about ready, too. As is the case with MultiTOS, we're evaluating the installation package very carefully so as to make it very easy for end users to install SpeedoGDOS. Presently the package consists of a five diskette set, which includes lots of BitStream fonts. I have been VERY impressed with this system. I had lived with extreme system slowdown when running FSM GDOS with more than 12 fonts on my system at work. I'm now running 71 Speedo fonts, with no noticeable performance degradation at all!!

Our customers will be able to call an 800 phone number that BitStream operates to order fonts to use with SpeedoGDOS. While not all of the BitStream font families have Speedo fonts in them, there are over 1,000 typefaces available that do.

We've decided to change the name of *Concierge* (previously *ST Sutra*) to **Atari Works**. It is still undergoing some testing, although it is much improved from when it was shown back at the Toronto Show last April. Much of the work has focused on the database portion of the program to improve the database import capabilities of the program. We're in the process of expanding our beta test group, and we're getting lots of good input from them for improvements in Atari Works. I'm very pleased with how the program is improving, and am even starting to use it myself much more often than before. Many of our staff members here at Atari, like the Administrative Assistants are starting to use Atari Works for their everyday word processor of choice.

Now, regarding the **Atari Falcon030**. I spoke at length with Sam Tramiel about the production/shipment status of this product on Monday. The sub-contractor that has been manufacturing Atari Falcon030s for us has not been able to meet our Q/A or production requirements. The number of the machines coming from this factory that have failed diagnostic tests is completely unacceptable to Sam. He is *angry* about this, as producing Atari Falcon030s is of paramount importance to us. Representatives from the factory were due in Sunnyvale on Monday afternoon to discuss a resolution of these problems with Sam. Regardless of the outcome of that meeting, Sam indicated to me that he was meeting with a representative from another factory to bring on board another manufacturer to produce Falcons for us. We expect this to delay significant shipments of Falcons until March.

There have been some rumors circulating that the Falcon030 is not **FCC approved**, and this is reason for the delay. This is simply not true!! As Atari indicated months ago, the Falcon has met with FCC approval. I note with some amusement that a request for FCC numbers was made by ST Report's staff in the message bases on GEnie, AFTER our offices had closed for the holidays. Until today, there was never a request made to our offices for the actual FCC number via anything resembling conventional means, like a phone call, letter, or fax. Not even a request in email!! Today, Ralph Mariano called me and asked about the FCC status of the Falcon, and discussed in detail with me his attempts to have the FCC provide him with the number. I don't understand why he has had problems getting this information, as it is a matter of public record.

At the time of his call, I didn't have the number at my desk ... but I do now! So, as promised, here is the FCC approval number for the Atari Falcon030: EBAF030ST, application dated September 18, 1992, granted November 5, 1992.

Falcon030s will continue to be available in small quantities until we get our second sub-contractor on board, or the production problems with the original contractor are resolved. Review units are being provided to publications that we believe can assist us in "getting the word out" on the Falcon. I'm ready to take on any questions that might be ready, Lou!

‹NEWDIMENSION› *Bob, what are Atari's plans to help deter low-ball prices from mail-order houses? Will The Falcon only be available through Atari or will they be available through distributors, too? Atari only, I hope.*

Hi Jeff, we are working on a new dealer agreement that we think will have a lot more "teeth" to it, something akin to what some other well known manufacturers, although not necessarily a computer manufacturer, use as their dealer agreement. We feel, as do many of our dealers, that the issue isn't so much mail order, it's the price that the units are sold for. ga

‹BRIAN.H› *Hi Bob, A few people have been inquiring in the BBS about an up-to-date list of AUTHORIZED Atari Service Centers. This would prevent some mail order problems and keep the customers happy. Can this be done? ga*

Brian, I'd prefer to hold off on that, since we're in the process of re-doing the dealer agreement. I can understand the concern about some users in finding out about authorized vs. Non author.. and I'll try to make that available AFTER we have the new set up done. Probably happen in April or March. ga

‹AEO.2› *Atari Works(better name!) is a great program, and with the addition of Speedo, even on a mere MSTe, it is fast and clean. The output is some of the best I have seen on my DJ500. I hope we can see this program bundled with new machines and available for older machines, too ... can you expand on this Bob?*

Hi, Andreas. I need to send you an updated version. You're not... up to date with some latest changes!! Atari Works is a fully integrated data base, word processor, and spread sheet with a spell-checker and thesaurus included with the program. I think, as you have indicated, everyone will be very pleased with the results of the product. Many different printers are supported, and the new installation program makes things a BREEZE! ga

‹C.CASSADAY› *Bob, all that you have said is extremely good news! Any comments on pricing of SpeedoGDOS, MultiTOS, and Atari Works? And when can I realistically expect to see them on my hard drive? About Multi-TOS: Are there separate 68000 and 68030 ? ga*

Thanks Chris, re pricing on MultiTOS, I'm not sure what the price will be for it. I'm confident that you'd love the pricing I have in mind.... I think we should UPLOAD it exclusively to GEnie, and let nature take it's course. I'm not 100% sure that will happen at this point, though...but it might!! Pricing on Speedo is more related to the pricing of the fonts. We have to pay a royalty on the fonts, and that is the real determining factor. Works is probably going to retail for about $100, and perhaps be bundled with all machines that are sold after it's ready. ga

‹M.JONES52› *Bob, are the review units being bundled with a "setup package" to help the reviewers get a representative look at what's available now, and a taste of things to come? And what's in it? ‹g› (Love your idea for MultiTos, btw!)*

Hi, Mark, yes they are. We also bundle a copy of the International Software Guide. We try not to show them too much of what the ... future might hold, as we want them to write about the here and REAL SOON NOW ‹grin›, and yet show them that we are planning for the future. ga

‹R.MONFORT1› *Bob B. I notice that Computer graphics world magazine had a Falcon announcement. What other publications will have a Falcon for review, especially the ones that do multimedia? ga*

Yes, Ringo, we have made inroads with about 19 different mags to have announcements and or reviews on the Atari Falcon030. Let me look real quick on my desk and see if I have it handy... Found it! *Applied Techniques, Business Week, BYTE, CNN, Computer Retail Week, Computer Technology, Computing NOW, Datamation, Design News, E.Q. Magazine, EDN News, Eyecom Magazine, Keyboard, Motorola DSP Newsletter, MultiMedia World, New Media, Newsbytes, Noteworthy, PC Laptop Computers, Scientific Computering & Automation, Studio Software Report* and a bunch of others that I can tell you about in email! :) ga

‹NEWDIMENSION› *Will Jerry Pournelle be getting a Falcon soon? I understand he's had an Amiga A1200 for some time now to review. Also, MultiTOS looks great on my TT030. I think everyone will be very pleased. ga*

We have already spent quite a bit of time with Jerry showing him a Falcon030, and expect him to get a review unit soon. We opted to provide one to *BYTE Magazine* first, rather than just one for Jerry. Perhaps saying *just* one for Jerry is a bad way of phrasing it, because obviously we want him to have one. I was present when we did the demo for him, and he's very enthusiastic about the Atari Falcon030. Especially the sound capabilities. I agree with your sentiments about MultiTOS, I'm in the process of doing everything to it that no one should do ‹GRIN›, and finding a few more interesting events. Eric Smith was in my office for a while today, and we had a nice time...and an update came out in a matter of hours.

‹C.FLUEGEL› *I was talking to James Grunke about the NAMM show and the Falcon roll out. He said originally he had planned on having plenty of Falcons on hand but that there were problems and he may not have any for sale, but he hoped to have a few. What are the current plans at the NAMM show? As the Falcon already has a good following in the Audio Realm (I get people in everyday asking about it, they* *don't know who makes it, but they hear it is supposed to be great) ... How big of a showing will atari have?? ga*

We have a very large room at NAMM this year, that will feature... 16 workstations with developers manning them. There will be a number of Atari Falcon030s there for people to see, and try there. In the event we are able to resolve our problems with the production at the factory (particularly with the Q/A issues) then we will be able to fill the orders that much sooner. I expect to take orders for machines at NAMM. We will, once again, be the premier computer at NAMM, as Apple and IBM have both bowed out. There has been terrific coverage in the music mags. They have been ringing my phone off the hook for information on the Falcon. I can also assure you that the show will be well covered here on GEnie, and in the Atari Press as well. *Atari Explorer Online*, our official online newsletter, and the excellent *Z*Net Online* magazine will be covering the show, as well as *AtariUser Magazine* providing the memorable print coverage for the show. ga

‹K.CAVAGHAN2› *Bob, in regards to your idea on uploading MultiTos, would disk vendors be allowed to distribute it as well or will it be limited distribution like FontGdos (just curious :}) I think it's a great idea either way. ga*

Hi Kent, I confess that I haven't even considered that at this point in time. I'm much more focused on getting the product done. I appreciate you bringing that issue to my attention, and I'll be sure to pass along that concern to the staff here. Good Point!!! ga

‹M.RIVMAN1› *Mr. B. (Bob) I appreciate the entry level status of the Falcon 030 and agree with it. But as one of those who long for tower, pizzabox', detachable Keyboard what can you say about near future 030, 040 config's ? Sorry to harp on it! Re: Apple and IBM bowing out of NAMM .... Cowards!*

:-) Hi Matt, I've always respected someone who knows when to do a graceful retreat! :) Re the Falcon box, let me put it this way....we've made other entry level home computers in the past, like the ST, and the STe. Both of them *ultimately* were placed in a two piece unit later on in the product's life span. So it is not unreasonable to guess that the Falcon might one day be in a different case...many of our products have. But the real issue is when will it happen? With the ST, it was over a year after the original machines shipped. With the STe, about two years. ga

‹AEO.2› *Atari ST Format had a comparison of the A1200 to the F030, favoring (guess who?) AEO should have an article based on a similar topic soon. Already there are graphics cards and accelerator cards available for the F030. Bob, do you think once the crush is over we can get the TOS crew on GEnie or Delphi to bug them about TOS hints? thanks Lou!*

Sure, that would be an excellent idea, Andreas. Once the "crush" is over, I think we can probably get someone like Eric Smith (who will probably kill me for volunteering him) online for a CO or for some activity in the message bases. Of course, here on GEnie, John Townsend is already online, although not as active as before. There is a topic here on GEnie for programming q's to be left to TOWNS, I think it is CAT 3 Topic 31 ... could be wrong, though! :) ga

‹H.NAGRA1› *Any idea on the number of Falcons that will be released in January to the general public? I'm very disappointed in the delay...any chance the Falcons in March will have the much rumored new case design? ga*

Harj, I'd prefer not to give out actual numbers, until they are in the warehouse. Believe me, when I spoke to Sam about the availability of the Falcon, he was thoroughly disgusted with the entire situation. The shortage of the Falcons is not a US problem it is a world wide problem...we're almost competing against our subsidiaries around the world to get product at this point in time Re the case...check out my answer from before. :) I share your disappointment in the delay and so does Sam.

‹C.CASSADAY› *Bob, there are some rumors in Euro mags about CD-ROM versions of the Falcon030. Can you comment on future variants of the Falcon030, and whether these new machines will necessitate the newer cases. ga*

Chris, No ... I can't. Other than what I've already stated about the case structure in other questions. There is no question that the machine will mature, the question is how quickly will that happen. Current versions of the Falcon030 are ready for a CD unit out of the box; there will be no reason to wait. I can only guess that having the CD included (if such a thing were done) would be reflected in the price of such a wonderful machine. :) ga

‹AEO.3› *Bob, you mentioned that there will be developers displaying their products at NAMM. Can you tell us which developers will be attending and the programs they will be demonstrating?*

I can tell you the developers, but I'm not 100% up to speed on what they are going to be showing. The developers are D2D Systems Chro-Magic, CodeHead Software, Barefoot Software, Goldleaf Pub. Thinkware, Dr. T's, Compo, Gadgets by Small, Hotz Technology, Digital FX, Okital, Steinberg, and Yamaha, along with a new developer that I am not personally familiar with, named MGI. They are from Germany. ga

‹C.FLUEGEL› *VERY large hard drives, where and what will be available? Is PLI still supporting the Atari? SCSI-2 and 2 1/2 drives are still quite uncommon. Also, when will WE the public and or dealers find out how the meeting with the folks who are actually building the Falcons went? ga*

I think it really depends on the application that you're using as for how much hard disk space you will need to get things done. I've not had any problems with connecting any type of common disk drives, like a Maxtor to a Falcon030. You don't have to have a 2 1/2" drive, that's just what the IDE drive is that is internal for the Falcon. Since the SCSI-II port is there it is EASY to connect up bigger units. We have hooked up 340 meg Maxtor units with no problems, pulled 'em right out of a TT030, which isn't SCSI-II. Please bear in mind that the pricing on the hard disks is not something we control, but is the same for all of hard disks that are produced across the market. Re the meeting... after I have a chance to speak to Sam, I'll try to pass along the meeting. I can assure you he wasn't going into the meeting with the reps that are NOT meeting our expectations with a smile on his face. On the other hand, the second company that we will be bringing on board is run by an old friend of the Tramiels, and I expect to see results from them quickly, like within a month. ga

‹NEWDIMENSION› *Concerning the redesign of the ST Book, what are some of the changes it is going through? Additionally, will the floppy drives in future machines ever be replaced with Floptical drives or the like? C.FLUEGEL: We sell fixed HD's up to 3.6 Gig!!*

You forgot to include pricing, Jeff. You're slipping. <-: Re: the ST Book, you can expect things like back lighting in the LCD screen, and possibly floppies or PCMIA connectors. There are some discussions about changing the microprocessor in the unit to something that is a little bit more "contemporary" than an 8Mhz 68000. Please bear in mind that we're focusing on the Falcon and the Jaguar right now, the ST Book is not getting 100% of our attention at this point in time. ga

‹C.OATES2› *Hi Bob. I already take the hypothetical nature of two-piece Falcons as a given, but do you see it as likely that if and when such machines ship they will contain the VME bus slot that we Mega STE and TT owners have? I, for one, have already invested a good deal of money in a Crazy dots 15 board, which surpasses current Falcon graphics (and possibly future) and would like to think that I can take the card with me when I upgrade my machine... ga*

Chris, obviously I can't make promises about such a prospective product with certainty, but I will be happy to encourage that suggestion to the design team. We use graphics cards here at Atari as well, and believe me, we hate spending money we don't need to just as much as you hate to. ga

‹JMGSOFT› *First off, thanks Bob for doing these RTCs. I don't envy the position myself... But to the question... What is being done, if anything, for the Canadian market. Since the Canadian Sub closed up, it has been pretty bleak and dismal up here when it comes to Atari support. No service, information, parts, and things just aren't ticking very well. I am still trying to resolve issues that date back to August when the subsidiary closed up. Is this all we can expect up here in the North? It doesn't look pretty, since I don't think the Atari brass considers Canada too seriously anymore. ga*

George, I was not aware that there were problems in getting service and repairs done. We have a specialist in Canada to deal with our Canadian dealers, who is well acquainted with Canada in the persona of Randy Tjin. Before we went off on holidays, Sam and I personally checked on the repairlogs, and we were told that they were running about a week to get each item out, and in fact were on target for their dates. If there are other needs that haven't been taken care of, please FAX the details to me at the office so we can address them. Certainly the changeover to the US from Canada has not gone smoothly, but we are committed to continuing to do business in Canada. If you have specific needs as far as information goes...we know each other, George. ASK! My address online, and phone numbers are pretty well known, and I invite your call. Thanks for the comments about being online, though!

‹AEO.7› *Does the FALCON include any "bundled" software? And if so, is there an opportunity to develop said software directly for ATARI ??? ga*

Yes, the Falcon will be bundled with 8 applications when it is shipped. The products include *Audio Fun Machine*, *Falcon D2D*, a direct to disk recorder, *System Audio Manager*, *ProCalc*, a full scientific calendar, *Talking Clock*, *CalAppt*, a calendar/rolodex type of utility, and a couple of games, *BreakOut* and *LandMines*. YES ... there is an opportunity to write that software for Atari. We, in fact, used outside developers for some key components of the software, like the *System Audio Manager*. ga

‹D.A.BRUMLEVE› *I've seen numerous rumors about the Falcon already shipping to dealers in small quantities in Germany and in England, and yet you refer here to "when it is shipped." Are the rumors false? Or do you just mean "when it is shipped in NA"?*

Excellent question, Dorothy. I do, in fact, mean in North America. There are small shipments of Falcon030s being sent to dealers in other parts of the world. Some of those units have been sold without MultiTOS, and with other minor problems. Like the CalAppt Manual that shipped in Germany is written in English. Another example of the Q/A problems that we've had with the factory.

I don't think many of us would consider an English manual a problem. ;-)

Virtually all of the machines that we've had here in the US have gone to either review sources or developers. I agree with your sentiments about the English manual here, but the German TOS and Keyboard might prove challenging ... or should I say educational??? ‹grin›ga

‹K.CAVAGHAN2› *Bob, there has been some concern about registrations that are sent into Atari and what, if anything, they are used for? Will the lists that are created be used for follow ups and promos or are they just being recycled :} ga*

Kent, they are indeed used; we build customer lists from them and they are, in fact, used for follow ups. We expect to be using them much more in the future than in the past. ga

‹C.FLUEGEL› *The original plans were to have "demo units" at dealers before any major rollout, is this still the plan? Even if you have to change manufacturers, can we still expect to see a demo unit here at Guitar Center? (James Grunke said we should, I hope it is true).. GA... Ps if I send you $900, will you send me a Falcon j/k*

Curt, the bidding is much higher than that at this point ... NO! ‹grin› Seriously, we intend to make demo units available for the dealers and regard this as a very important step in the process of both selling and marketing the Falcon. We do have a demo unit plan for our dealers that purchase directly from us, which is one of the benefits of dealing directly with Atari, rather than through another re-seller or distributor. We have, when possible, shipped units to dealers for special exhibitions on a temporary basis. If you have a specific need for a unit for a really important event for your dealership, then feel free to contact me. ga

‹AEO.7› *BOB ... Just thought I'd mention here, then, that I've E-mailed you a proposal re: the previous query! Aside from that, what is the latest concerning AIM if you know anything. I know this is a change of topic, but one of interest to all! ga*

I always forward those things along to our dev support group, but I'll be happy to send it along again. We do get an awful lot of those. It's possible that they overlooked yours, and for that, I apologize. Regarding *AIM*, I really haven't spoken to Pattie or Bill in sometime myself. I know no more than you... it's been a while since I've seen an issue of *AIM*, and they seem to be a bit behind in their issues. But since *Explorer* is also a bit behind, I'm not about to cast stones. But since we're now speaking about *Explorer*, I'm happy to report that the latest issue of *Atari Explorer* has just come back from the printer, and looks FABULOUS! This is the first issue under the capable efforts of Mike Lindsay and Darren Meer since they have taken over the magazine. Mike is lurking tonight here online as AEO.MAG, so be sure to say hi to him!! ga

‹BRIAN.H› *What about the Jaguar? Will it be finished this year? Is it as good as the rumors? Will this be the GAME machine??? I am not trying for rumors, just the facts [grin].ga*

Hi Brian, it looks FABULOUS. Sometimes mere words are a poor tool to describe things ... and this is one of those cases. During my discussions with Sam earlier this week, we went over to the lab and had a peek at the Jaguar. I was astonished at the quality of the machine. We've begun shipping developer units out now, and have had developer symposiums for the units as well. The very-well-known-programmer, whose name I cannot reveal, that is here in Sunnyvale working with us on the Jaguar is *very* enthusiastic about the machine. The demo that he showed us was extraordinary, both colorful and fast, the horizontal scrolling was smooth, and very, very, very fast!!!! Howzat, Brian?? :) ga

‹[Lou] ST.LOU›

Thanks to Bob for a magnificent evening and thanks to all the users who stopped by—old and new faces alike ... especially my good friend Martha Dycus who stayed to the very end! Yea, Martha! I would also like to mention that the inaugural GEnie Notes Column will appear in the next issue of *Current Notes*! Six pages of great GEnie news. Make sure your friends see it!

OK, Bob ... you were great, great, great!!!! So you can have the last word tonight. ga

‹BOB-BRODIE›

Lou, thanks again for doing such a stellar job of running the RTC. Once again, I've had a wonderful time being here on GEnie, our official online service. I appreciate the opportunity to gather here on this monthly basis, and think that it will continue to work well for ALL of us. I'm looking forward to next month's CO already with great anticipation; the first ones have gone over so very well. Thanks again for attending, and-good night!!

Dateline Atari! with Bob Brodie is held on the first Friday of each month. Watch the RTC Banner for details. See you on February 5th, 1993 for the next installment of Dateline Atari! with Bob Brodie.

You are also invited to drop in on Monday or Wednesday evenings each week. Bob Brodie can often be found "with the gang" on those nights too! All Real Time Conferences begin at 10:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

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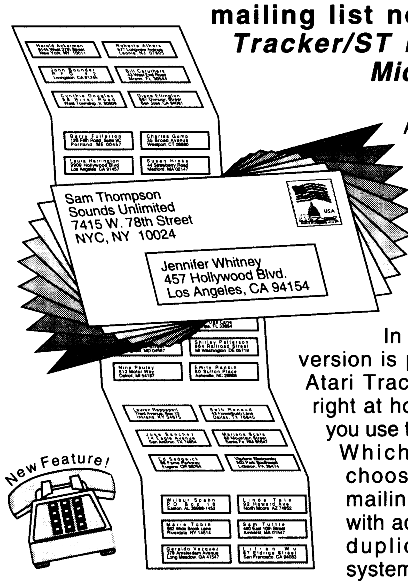

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High Resolution Video

What Is It Really Like?

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You'll all be enthused to know that my wrecked car is almost all better now. (Oh, no-he's not going to give us more driving hints, is he?) Yes, the car was totaled, but our friendly local desperate body-shop was able to rebuild it, thanks to the check from the insurance company.

It runs great, it's in alignment, and you'd hardly know its right side had been missing. If we can just fix the left windshield wiper and this annoying leak, we'll be home free!

So anyway, I hope y'all had a nice holiday. And I hope your car doesn't leak. On to sexier topics.

MacEnvy

The maximum resolution available on an ST or STe in color is 640 x 200. That's right, kids, this is the glorious 4-color, medium resolution mode you've come to despise. "Ooh, you mean I can use red, green, black, and white—all at once?"

Go down to low resolution and you get all the way up to 16 colors. And your resolution is a staggering 320 x 200!

So you go to Office Depot and you see a Mac Performa 400 sitting there (with a $3000 price tag--but that's another story). You diddle around on the desktop a bit, thinking, "Gee, my Atari can do all this stuff," and you go on. But the one thing that caught your eye was just the sheer unadulterated northern Italian Renaissance beauty of the GRAPHICS! It was System 7, and the icons were different colors, and the windows were soft tones of grey and blue, with a tint of green around the buttons. Wouldn't it be nice to have a desktop display that was at least 640 x 480, with at least 16 colors?

Repeat previous paragraph. Insert "486DX Box" and "Windows 3.1."

Well gosh, what do you have to do to get elusive "better graphics" on an Atari? And what will it cost you?

What You Can't Do

It is more or less impossible to upgrade the graphics on a 520ST, 520STfm, 1040STf, Stacy, or 520/1040 STe. There have been attempts at "VGA" boxes for these machines. To the best of my knowledge, they have all either not worked, have been prohibitively expensive, or have been uncomfortably incompatible. If someone wants to call a little-known wonder product to my attention, now would be a good time.

In a nutshell, if you have one of the aforementioned machines, don't start having wild fantasies about "single upgrade solutions" and the luscious graphics they might bring to you on lonesome summer nights.

What You Can Do

To meet our minimum lust-level requirement of 640 x 480 at 16 colors, you must have one of the following machines.

1) Stock TT030 (16 colors @ 640 x 480)
2) Mega STe with Graphics Card
3) Falcon 030 (256 colors @ 640 x 480, plus other modes)
4) Mega ST with Graphics Card

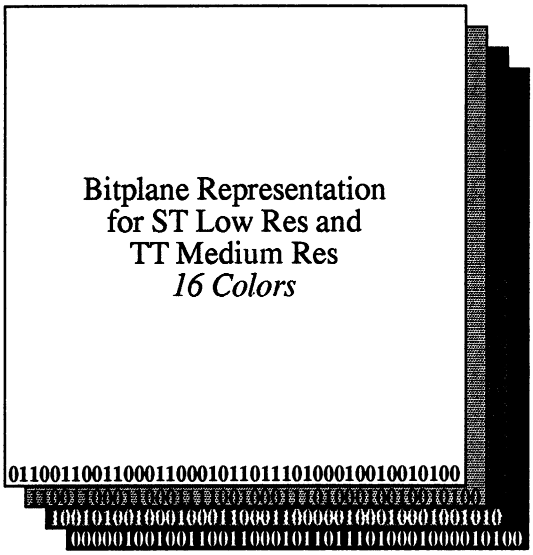
And now, before we get into all the gory details of what your various options are, let's take a second to define and explore some terms and concepts.

Color Is Memory

The psychotic fantasy behind the graphics modes in the ST is that they all take up exactly 32,000 bytes of RAM. (In case you don't know, your computer's display is a picture of a hunk of RAM in your machine. In the ST, that hunk of RAM is always 32,000 bytes, or approximately 32Kbytes, regardless of what resolution you're using.)

Color is defined in terms of "bitplanes," which allude to the fact that the color of every pixel on your screen is made up of a combination of bits. (See illustration.) These bits are organized logically into sets by us geeks, and these sets are called bitplanes. If you are familiar with 4-color separation printing, you can think of bitplanes in a similar fashion. They are binary "transparencies" that combine to form a single layer of varied color.

ST Low Resolution has 4 bitplanes. That is to say that each of the pixels on the 320 x 200 screen could be one of 16 colors, and those 16 colors are created by



Each pixel on the screen is made up of one bit from each of the four bitplanes in ST Low and TT Medium Resolutions. Based on the illustration above, the leftmost screen pixel would be 0110 in color, the second 1100, the third 1000, etc. The layers are not physically separated in memory (those three pixels would be represented as 011011001000 in memory, but separating into bitplanes makes it easier for programmers.) Because ST Low and TT Medium share the same number of bitplanes, many programs and demos designed to work in ST Low may also operate in TT Medium without too much trouble.

all the different combinations possible in each of those 4 bits. Verify this yourself; if you count from 0 to 15 in binary (see below), you will list all the possibilities.

0000 0001 0010 0011
0100 0101 0110 0111
1000 1001 1010 1011
1100 1101 1110 1111

That's 16 combinations. Also consider that two pixels (4 bits each) are represented by one *byte* (one byte = 8 bits) in this resolution.

320 x 200 = 64,000 x 4 bitplanes = 256,000 bits
(256,000 bits / 8 = 32,000 bytes)

ST Medium Resolution has 2 bitplanes, for a total of 4 colors (00,01,10,11). That was black, green, red, and white, for those of you who don't know binary. They manage to maintain the 32,000 byte total by halving the colors and doubling the horizontal resolution.

640 x 200 = 128,000 x 2 bitplanes = 256,000 bits

ST High Resolution has only one bitplane (which is good, because it's only black and white). So when you look at a single blackened pixel on an SM124, you know it's because in a DRAM chip somewhere inside your machine, there lurks a single 0 bit.

640 x 400 = 256,000 x 1 bitplane = 256,000 bits

My, isn't this all just very *convenient*?

Why Was This Setup Smart?

Well, the benefits are for the most part pretty obvious. You get a "playful" and colorful low resolution mode, for your games and stuff, you get a "useful" 80 column medium resolution mode (for game players who might want to use a spreadsheet sometimes), and you get a "boring but beautiful" high-resolution monochrome mode. Wow, so much versatility from a very sterile 32,000 bytes. Bravo, Tramiels.

A somewhat hidden benefit of this scheme is that, for the color resolutions, you can use relatively inexpensive (slow) monitors which have a horizontal sync rate of 15.75 KHz. Gee, you know what? That sync rate is compatible with a TV or composite video signal, too. From this we have the RF modulators available on many ST's, giving them the ability to attach (in color modes only) to an analog RGB monitor, a composite video monitor, and to a TV or VCR. In fact, you could run all three of these simultaneously if you did a little fancy cabling.

The monochrome monitor has to go a little faster because the resolution is higher. (You'll see why this is so in just a second). But the single-phosphor coating and single scanning gun offset the price of the higher speed and, in the end, the ST monochrome monitors are cheaper than the slower color units.

Resolution Is Data Rate

To get the nice flicker-free display you're used to on your ST, the entire screen needs to be redrawn at least 60 times per second. Some European ST games drop the refresh rate down to 50 times per second (Hertz or Hz is what us dweebs use for *times per second.*) Your eye will notice this decrease in speed, and many users report headaches and eyestrain from lengthy exposure. Viewers of British / European TV may report the same problems; they are only refreshed at 50Hz under the PAL standard. And all along they thought it was the programs giving them headaches!!

(Note: I will mention numbers using kHz and Hz. Hertz (Hz) is the abbreviation for cycles per second, and is named after this scientist, Mr. Hertz. In this article, when I say "50, 60, or 70" Hz, I am speaking of the screen redraw frequency. When I say 15.75 or 37 kHz, I am speaking of the actual speed of the electron beam across the screen horizontally. KiloHertz (kHz) is thousands of times per second.)

So, if you're going to increase resolution from say 640 x 200 to 640 x 480, and you're still going to put up a new screen 60 times per second, you're putting some pressure on your monitor to perform. Something's got to give.

Think of the data being sent to your monitor as paint coming out of a garden hose. And suppose that the color of that paint constantly changed. Furthermore, suppose that it was your job to fill up an array of buckets (try 200 rows of 640 buckets) with this paint. And imagine you had to do this 60 times a second. Complicate this further: *all* the buckets leak (a phosphor won't stay lit for long).

So the paint starts coming out and you carefully aim into the first bucket in the upper left hand corner of your bucket "screen" and you run along that first top row at a good and even pace, all the while keeping your hose expertly aimed into each and every of the 640 buckets in that row respectively. At the end of the row, you turn around and there's some "blank paint" coming out of the hose as you run back to the beginning of the second row. Right when you get there the color paint starts again, changing always from white to green to black to blue (or whatever colors are on the screen). Repeat for 200 rows.

You're already pretty tired, but it's your job as a dutiful monitor to do what your master tells you. Well, suppose now you had to fill up a "screen" still 640 buckets wide but this time with 480 rows of buckets, and you still had to do it 60 times a second! Man, in this economy you have to work twice as hard to make half the money! Well, you accept the task, but you realize this means you have to get in shape and learn how to run more than twice as fast. Before you had to fill 128,000 pixel buckets. Now you have to fill 307,200 buckets in the same amount of time. That requires 2.4 times more speed.

Well, gosh, fortunately for your ST color monitor, it's a member of a labor union and it's made it quite clear that it will work no faster than 15.75 KHz. (Think of this speed as the rate at which the monitor's scan gun can travel across the screen.) If it's threatened with going faster, it responds quite simply by going on permanent strike. It blows up.

What it will do, though (labor always seems to be able to reach a lazy compromise), is it will go ahead and draw a 640 x 480 screen if you give it about twice as much time to do it in. That is to say, you can produce a 640 x 480 image on an SC1224 / SC1435 color monitor, as long as you don't mind the flicker. It's really drawing it at about 30Hz, or about 30 times per second rather than 60. Gee, how do you think the Falcon gets a 640 x 480 picture onto an SC1224? This is called interlacing. It's why everyone hated the Amiga when it first came out.

Alternatively, we could just say "no" to monitors that run too slow. This brings us up to VGA monitors, which are designed to run at about 31-40 KHz (about 2.4 times faster than an SC1224) and they produce a 60Hz, 640 x 480, beautifully flicker-free display.

Why did I put you through this hellish analogy? Well, it's because you need to have a firm understanding of *why* an SC1224 can't display a 1024 x 768 screen (unless it draws the screen about nine times a second—do I hear a new "MegaInterlace" mode being born? ‹grin›)

Color in the Signal

We didn't place a whole lot of restrictions on color in this analogy, mostly because, for all practical purposes, color is irrelevant to the specifications of monitors these days.

Your SC1224, VGA, and super-duper high-quality multi-sync ultra-flare bell-bottomed monitors all share one common specification: they are analog RGB. This means that you can produce any color the eye can see using an analog monitor. Analog means precisely what it sounds like it means: the color produced on-screen is exactly analogous to the voltage it is fed.

A fun experiment would be to turn your ST on and go into a program which produces a white screen. Patch three potentiometers into the R, G, and B signals of your ST's monitor output. Then tweak the knobs. You could produce any color imaginable on-screen because you can linearly modify the voltages on all three lines. Of course, this is of limited usefulness. But, if you wanted to change a white screen into yellow, just turn down all your blue (red and green make yellow). Kind of cool, huh?

Of course it used to be, back in the paleolithic days of CGA and EGA, that color was represented digitally, meaning that there was a finite number of colors that the monitor's circuitry could actually display. (Think of analog RGB colors as points on a continuously increasing diagonal line. Think of digital / TTL RGB colors as stairs on a staircase. There are only so many stairs, but there are an infinite number of points on a straight, no-jaggies diagonal line.)

So as we discussed before, these days color is more of a consideration for your computer and the shifter circuitry that converts the bitplanes into analog color voltages. The monitor is more concerned about keeping up with the pace of the paint, not what color it is.

The ST Monochrome Monitor

The ST doesn't always redraw the screen at 50 or 60 Hz. With the SM124, it redraws it at 70 Hz. And its horizontal sync rate is about 37 kHz. This is because if the monitor is to redraw the screen 16% more frequently (70 Hz, not 60 Hz) and the resolution is higher, then it is going to need to be fed its paint (signal) faster.

If we can do 128,000 pixels at 60Hz and 15.75kHz for medium resolution, then for high resolution it must be 256,000 pixels at 70Hz, and at a higher scan rate.

256,000 pixels x 1.16 (16% faster) = 298,666 pixels
298,666 pixels / 128,000 pixels = 2.33 times more
buckets in same amount of time

So, the SM124 / SM147 must sync up 2.33 times faster, or 36.75kHz.

Multisync Monitors

Multiscanning (or to use the very popular, NEC trademarked name Multisync) monitors have become very popular, and to some I fancy they have become an unexplored video panacea. Yes, with some multisync monitors you can display all three ST video resolutions. There are limitations.

First, to display all three video resolutions you now understand that your monitor must be able to do both of these things:

1) Display at 60Hz a color video signal coming in at 15.75kHz.
2) Display at 70Hz a mono video signal coming in at 36.75kHz.

Well gosh, that ain't too hard for some monitors. But consider what we said about VGA and Super VGA, which are now the standard LCD (lowest common denominator) video modes. They operate at least at 640 x 480, and that resolution requires a horizontal scanning rate of at least 31.5kHz.

The definition of multisync monitors is that they can automatically adapt and sync up (horizontally) to a given video signal, but for every monitor there is a range, specifying its lowest and highest speed limit.

Suppose for a minute that you were a monitor manufacturer. Well, if you were building multisync monitors, you'd make that range as small as is possible because the circuitry that helps the monitor sync up would then be simplified. What rate would you choose as the low end?

Probably 31.5kHz. Besides the ST, older Amigas, and some old PC video cards (which no one wants to support), nothing is putting out video any slower than that.

Two or three years ago, monitor manufacturers were willing to raise the prices of the monitors to support whatever was out there still operating at 15.75kHz, but these days there's just no reason to add that cost to the units. No one's really using 15.75kHz anymore, except for us and some lone Amiga people. But Amiga people don't need a multisync monitor; they don't have a decent monochrome mode!

What this means is that there are very, very few monitors these days which will actually hook up to a standard ST and fulfill the "all three resolutions" promise. Yes, there are a few manufacturers still turning out monitors with this spec, but nowhere near as many as there were three years ago. I personally can only think of one multisync monitor which still goes at 15.75kHz, and those are in limited supply.

You can, of course, use almost any VGA monitor to display ST monochrome, because the sync rates are still in range for those monitors. The Atari SM147 monitor is actually a tweaked VGA grayscale monitor, and with some wiring changes, it could be used on a PC or TT.

To state the obvious, multisync monitors don't come with a 13 pin din connector on them, either. There are many companies which make "switchboxes" that will connect a multisync to an ST. A switchbox is required to let your ST know whether to run in color or mono; that function is usually handled by a "monochrome detect" line that gets turned on when you plug your ST monochrome monitor in.

How Bound Are the TT030 and Falcon?

Now that you understand the limitations of ST video, you should realize that the TT030 and Falcon have analogous, but different, boundaries.

The TT030 has essentially only two modes of video operation: color and monochrome. The color mode handles ST Low, ST Medium, ST High, TT Low and TT Medium. The monochrome mode handles only TT High.

The TT030, in color, is always operating at about 35kHz with a 60Hz refresh rate. This may seem perplexing because we just got through saying that ST Low and ST Medium require a 15.75kHz scan rate.

Well, gosh, the TT just draws a "picture" of those lower resolutions, using the higher scan rate. It effectively sends out the same amount of data in TT medium as it does in ST medium, just the data itself is lower in resolution.

Even ST High, normally a mono-only mode, is really a color mode on the TT030. Rather than monochrome (black and white), it's a "duochrome" mode, where you can set up two colors to use—a background and a foreground color.

So, all in all, maintaining a fixed frequency in color operation probably simplifies the way the TT works, and it frees you from having to find monitors that will go at 15.75kHz. The TT030 brings VGA to you, and even uses a standard DB15HD VGA video connector.

In monochrome mode, you must use the Atari TTM194 or 195 monitors (same resolution, different OEM). These monitors use digital ECL circuitry, which uses a lot of power (relative to other monitors) but is very fast. I believe that the TT refreshes at 70Hz in monochrome, giving you a crisp and flicker free display at 1280 x 960. No, you can't hook an ST moniterm to a TT, even though they look about the same and do the same resolution. ST moniterms weren't ECL, and they'll die if you try to run them on a TT.

Unfortunately, the TT030 doesn't put out a 100% perfect VGA signal—it's like the horizontal blank is too long relative to the pixel data. For whatever reason, on many VGA monitors, the screen may appear to be squashed horizontally, which is OK, but it screws up your aspect ratio in programs where that matters. CAD and DTP users would be most displeased to know that what looked like a square was really a wide rectangle, and that circles were really ovals.

The Atari PTC1426 didn't have this problem—they had a switch that would select between TT and VGA modes, and it changed the width properly. Well, the PTC1426 for one reason or another, is no longer available, and we consumers have been left to make do with whatever we can get. There are a few monitors which have liberal enough horizontal width controls to compensate. But most do not. The Magnavox CM9089 (if you can find them), the CTX 14" or 17" color, and the Princeton Ultra 14/1400 seem to do pretty well on this score.

To go over the TT video modes once more:

1) ST Low (320 x 200) 16 Color
2) ST Medium (640 x 200) 4 Color
3) ST High (640 x 400) 2 Color (duochrome)
4) TT Low (320 x 480) 256 Color
5) TT Medium (640 x 480) 16 Color
6) TT High (1280 x 960) Monochrome

Most people end up using TT Medium for work (it looks like ST high, with extra pixels and 16 colors), and TT Low for color graphics. Or, they use TT High and just do monochrome.

The Falcon

The Falcon has the widest range of video possibilities of any Atari computer. Rather than having you select one of a few resolutions, the Falcon gives you the option to pick:

- 2 (1 bitplane), 4 (2 bitplane), 16 (4 bitplane) 256 (8 bitplane) or True Color (15 bitplane)
- 40 or 80 columns
- Interlace On or Off
- Double Line On or Off (Halves Vertical Resolution)

You also have access to all ST and all TT color resolutions, as they are just specific combinations of the above choices.

Of course, we must realize that not all combinations will be available to you all the time.

For instance, you can't do True Color in 640 x 480 on a VGA monitor, probably because the Falcon can't generate the signal that fast. You can do 640 x 240 in True Color on a VGA monitor.

You can do 640 x 480 in True Color on an inexpensive SC1224 / SC1435 or other 15.75kHz monitor though, using interlacing. This is because the signal is only being refreshed at about 30Hz.

The fact that you can only do 640 x 320 in True Color at 60Hz on a VGA monitor is consistent with the finding that you can do True Color at 640 x 480 on an SC1224 at 30Hz. See, you're doubling one thing and halving another, so the net amount of work the computer has to do is the same in both scenarios.

The Falcon will attach to an SC1224, a VGA monitor, an ST monochrome monitor, a composite video signal or a TV, using little adapters supplied with the machine. This is a nice way to handle it because it gives you a lot of choices.

For something really sickening, tell a Falcon to do ST High Resolution on an SC1224 in Germany. You get 50Hz interlacing, which means the screen is only drawn at 25Hz. This looks like a fireworks show and will actually made my body flinch.

In America at 60Hz, the interlacing isn't too bad, especially if you're displaying pictures or other exciting graphics. Interlacing doesn't do well with large fields of solid colors on, say, your desktop. Trying to use the desktop at 640 x 480 on an SC1224 isn't so satisfying, and it's doubtful you'd want to do it often. You're better off almost to kill the interlacing and use 640 x 240, or get a VGA monitor. The Falcon does not have the VGA screen-width quirk.

You can't, obviously, get too wild and crazy with an ST monochrome monitor on a Falcon. I haven't tried it yet, but I suspect that you will probably only have access to one or two mono resolutions.

What Is True Color?

True Color, in Atari's case, is a fancy way of saying 32,768 colors. You notice that I listed the number of bitplanes for each color mode possible on the Falcon. Well, "True Color" is 15-bit color on the Falcon.

It has been pretty universally accepted that 24-bit color is the cat's meow for "true color" in the rest of the world. But just as the CD has been pretty universally accepted as the "ultimate recording medium" and Sony and Philips have introduced lower-resolution digital recording media which are supposed to record "only the sounds that humans can actually hear," Atari claims that 15-bit color allows production of all colors that humans can see.

Whether or not this is true is for you to decide. I submit that the True Color mode on the Falcon looks darn good, and that if they were to devote any more memory to the screen, they'd need a lot more hardware to keep the machine from being too slow.

If you recall our equation that color is memory, it is painfully obvious that this is true when using True Color mode on a Falcon 030 desktop. When a section of your screen is moved or drawn, using the bit-block-transfer (blit) method, you can actually watch the individual pixels being drawn. This is because with True Color, and 15 bits per pixel, you're moving 15 times more data than with ST monochrome mode, and you're accordingly taking 15 times longer for some steps in the redraw process.

If you drop down to the 256 color mode for regular usage, you'll find that things go somewhat faster. That's only 8 bitplanes, not 15, and there's not as much work to be done.

Back to the original point here. While 24-bit color would be nice, it's not really necessary. You can argue that that kind of range is wasted on your eyes, and you'll be certain that you don't want to bog the machine down any further with video memory constraints.

Incidentally, I can't help but think that you'll have to take video memory into consideration when you buy a Falcon. 640 x 480 x 15 bits / 8 bits / byte = 562K of RAM. That's more than is in a 520ST! It's possible that they set aside like a meg of dedicated video RAM in the machine already, but I'm not sure. Something to think about.

Why is it 15-bit and not 16-bit? Well, they wanted a "spare-bit" and I think it's being used for genlock. (Genlock allows you to synchronize your TV or video camera to the computer's video signal, and then mix together all of both screens or parts of both, depending on your circuitry.) This extra bit might be used to mix only certain screen pixels into the video signal. But rest assured that they're not trying to use a strictly 15-bit system—that would get very messy.

Video Cards

The final option available to Mega ST, Mega STe, and TT030 users is a video card. There is a host of choices available for these machines, including ISAAC, AlberTT, Leonardo (24 bit), Matrix, Crazy Dots, and Moniterm. I am familiar with the Crazy Dots (for Color or Mono) and the Moniterm (for mono). However, with little exception, what I say about these cards can and must be applied to the other choices.

Crazy Dots

Using the Crazy Dots card you can hook just about any monitor to your machine. You just need to make sure that the wiring is right and that you're driving your monitor with the right refresh rate and horizontal scan rate. This means that the maximum resolution is by and large determined by the "speed" of the monitor.

I am using a CTX 17" color monitor on my Crazy Dots with a TT. Its low-end horizontal sync is about 30kHz, its high end is about 90kHz, and it can refresh up to almost 120Hz. This monitor costs about $700-$900 and is considered on the low-end of high-end color monitors.

The Crazy Dots card comes in two versions: 8-bit and 15-bit color. You get 256 or 32,768 simultaneous on-screen colors, depending on which board you get. Mine is the 15-bit board. The only real difference between these two boards is the amount of video RAM (remember, color is memory); you can even upgrade the memory on an 8-bit card to the 15-bit level. The 15-bit Crazy Dots is available through Gribnif for about $1,000 and the 8-bit version is $150 less.

With the 32K card, you can do 15-bit color at a bunch of different resolutions. In fact, you can basically emulate Falcon True Color graphics using a Crazy Dots card. The board comes with a program that allows you to "create" new video modes, with different resolutions and numbers of colors, limited only by your monitor. So this setup, with the right monitor, allows you more flexibility than a Falcon in a lot of ways.

This is a list of the resolutions available to me using my CTX 17" monitor and Crazy Dots:

640 x 400	111 Hz	
640 x 480	85 Hz	up to
800 x 608	95 Hz	32K color
1024 x 768	76 Hz	
1024 x 880	65 Hz	up to
1280 x 800	97 Hz interlaced	256 color
1280 x 960	83 Hz interlaced	up to
1664 x 1200	65 Hz interlaced	4 color

You can't do 1024 x 880 at 32K colors at 65Hz on Crazy Dots for the same reason you can't do 640 x 480 at 32K colors at 60Hz on a Falcon. It takes too much work to create a 32K color screen, so you have to limit the resolution or refresh rate. But believe me, 800 x 608 at 32K colors is not shabby, and on my machine, it's much faster than the Falcon because the machine is a 32MHz 68030, not 16MHz. And I'd be willing to bet that the Crazy Dots has a little more video horsepower than the Falcon.

As I said, Crazy Dots comes with a video mode generator program, so you can use it with just about any monitor, even an SC1224. You just need to recognize that it won't sync any faster than about 16kHz, and that it won't refresh any faster than about 60-62 Hz. There is a set, however small, of exciting SC1224 video modes you can create knowing these limitations.

Not all of the alternative video cards are so programmable, but they are still subject to the same basic monitor speed limitations. Check with the vendor of your choice to find out about how these different video cards handle things.

Software Drivers

Just having a video card plugged into your machine isn't enough to insure that your computer or software knows about it. Each videocard requires a special screen-driver to make it work with your software.

All versions of TOS since 1.4 recognize the possibility of having an alternative display. Mega ST users with TOS 1.2 must upgrade to 1.4 to have compatibility with alternative monitors.

Crazy Dots has a "two-tier" software driver. First, there is a *Crazy Dots Manager* program that lives in the auto folder and allows you to select the physical resolution when you boot up. Second, there is a GDOS screen driver which tells GDOS to draw the screen at a particular place in memory, presumably into the video RAM on board the Crazy Dots card. Not all video card drivers require GDOS, but it seems like a decent enough way of handling the problem. There are different .SYS screen drivers, depending on the number of colors.

With few exceptions, ST software that doesn't follow operating system conventions (like using the VDI for screen display) will not run on alternate video cards like Crazy Dots, or even on all standard ST/TT/Falcon configurations. This, for the most part, means games.

Any game which auto-boots off a floppy will not run on Crazy Dots. Period. Programs written specifically for a particular resolution may have a hard time on Crazy Dots.

The Crazy Dots Manager program does allow 1280 x 960 emulation of the SM194 / TTM194, and things which are not 100% kosher, but run on those monitors anyway, will also run on Crazy Dots.

A couple of different drivers for the SM194 / Moniterm (same thing) have popped up, and they suffer from the same problem. Anything that bypasses the operating system for standard screen display will probably cause problems.

A testimony to the robustness of the Crazy Dots driver, it works beautifully with the new Speedo GDOS and MultiTOS, which brings me to my next point.

Color's Nice, But Why Do You Need Resolution?

If you really plan to take advantage of a multitasking operating system like MultiTOS, you can count on having multiple windows open at any given time. If you're just using a 640 x 480 display (which is the max on a Falcon without modification), where in the heck can you put these extra windows?

With Crazy Dots or a TTM194 / SM194 / Moniterm, you'll have no worries. It's pretty universally agreed that you want 800 x 600 at the very least for real window-based multitasking. And color's nice too--so Crazy Dots is even more attractive then.

The Competition

As far as meeting up with competing products / platforms one-for-one, I'd say that the available Atari technology is essentially neck-in-neck with what is put forth by Apple or the PC swamp.

The Falcon is very comparable to a Performa 400 in video (640 x 480 with 256 colors). And while its video can't be easily expanded, it costs a lot less and is more flexible.

To get 800 x 600, 1024 x 768, etc., with 256 or especially True Color, you're talking about spending between $500 and $1000 whether you're talking Apple or PC, and frequently the lower cost boards are much slower. Why do you think there are "Windows accelerators" for PC's? They intercept tokenized Windows graphics instructions and do stuff like blitting, so the screen isn't so darn slow.

Give or take $100 or so, you'd have to spend between $1500 and $2000 to get high-res, decent, color and fast video, whether you're talking about your Atari, Mac, or PC.

Other Than Lust, Why?

As the Falcon comes around, there will become more and more programs which use 256 colors regularly. *MultiTOS* looks GREAT on a Crazy Dots card at 256 colors and 1024 x 768. You get all the 3-D buttons, and the desktop is easily as mouthwatering as on a Performa 400. I can't wait to get the final version of MultiTOS, which will use color, animated icons (as seen on the Falcon).

Programs like *Calamus SL*, *PageStream*, *Retouche Professional*, HiSoft's *TruePaint*, and others which will appear before too long, all take advantage of high-res color. There are many other programs that are already very compatible with alternate video modes, but may not utilize them fully. (Say, *Touch-Up* for example).

But anyway, 1993 will be the year of alternative video on the Atari, thanks to things like Crazy Dots and the Falcon.

Questions

There's a lot to bite off and chew here. If anyone has any specific questions they'd like to ask, please send them to me. I'll address them happily in a future CN issue.

Until next time, may *Current Notes* continue to be your high-res True Color alternative monitor on the world of Atari.

Try Me:

Phone: (410) 544-6943; FAX: (410) 544-1FAX
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Current Notes PD/Shareware Cartridge No. 6
70 Disks: #640 - #709 (January 1992 to July 1992)

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Application Programs
649d Checkbook
645d Copilot
671d Crack art
672d Diabetic Recipes
653d Gnom Plot
701d King James Ver NT
677d Linear Albebra
649d Megacheck
658d Multi-language
670d Picture Packer
677d Plot v 1.68
653d Satellite Prediction
658d Spell One
678d Spice: Circuit Anal
700 Spiritware Bible Concordance
704d ST Writer Elite v4.8
649d Stock->Smart v2.1
677d Sub-Cal v2.0
677d TN Printing Calc
677d Turing Machine Simulation

Clip Art
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676 CVG Pictures
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665d Teddy Bear 3

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695d Convector Prof
648d Crossword Creator
648d DC Data Diet
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685d Home Accounts 2
708d Inventory Pro v6.1
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659d ShowMem4
659d SilkMse2
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643d Tlc-fxr2
643d Tlc-namr2
643d Tlc-play2
643d Tlc-show2
706d Tool19
652d Trash
642d Vkill381
640 Vkiller
641d Vkiller
707d Warp 9 Fonts
707d Warp 9 Pictues
659d Whatis57
706d Worm
696d Worm

New disks not on Cart 6:

#710d: RPG Games - Quest, Pacific Islands, Robin Hood.

#711d: Arcade Games - Hurry! V1.0, Marbleous V1.0, Cops N Robbers, Sno-Fite.

#712d: Triplink! FEDBBS.

#713d/#714d: Transcendence BBS demo.

#715d: ST-Keep BBS.

#716d: Telecom Prgs - Assassin; Galactic Empire; Ghost Writer; Joute; Rufus.

#717d: Utilities - 1Spool, Bootyme2, Bubble, Changesz, Company, Ctcaps10, Dots, Esh1224, Find-all, lookst16, M-DePack, Poolfx92, TimeCard.

#718d: Ideal_List V3.105 - incredible text file utility.

#719d: Utilities - Arcgsh41, Bed, Hdinfo17, James12, Lzh201K, Protect6, Reqst109, Re-Boot, Serialfx, Treeview.

#720d: Mono Word Fun - Search Me, DB Writer, Jumple, Jumble2, Zestkeno, Monogiff, Mumbo.

721d: Demos - Silhouette, G-Man, UK Virus Killer.

722d: Quotes & Names - Quote1, Greeting, Alpha, Spidspel.

723d: Utilities - Strip Formatter, Calendar v6.2b, Memory, STSaver2.

#724d/#725d: Font GDOS (2-disk set)

#726d: MiNT Windows- MGR, MW, RMGR.

#727d/#728d: MiNT Utilities (binary/source)

#729d: MiNT Shells - Ksh & tcsh.

CN Cartridges are $119.95 (+$3 S&H). Order from CN Library, address below.

CURRENT NOTES

New in February!!!

CN Cartridge #7

See pages 76-80 for a description of the disks now available on CN Cartridge #7 (CN disks #710-#782).

Any of the disks listed on this 44MB Syquest removable cartridge can be ordered individually. CN disks are $4 each (10 for $35). Add $1 for every 6 disks for S&H. (Max charge of $6 for S&H.) Order disks from CN Library, 122 N. Johnson Rd, Sterling, VA 20164. Phone orders accepted for MC/VISA charges. Call (703) 450-4761.

Atari Industry News and Announcements

Debonair Software Announces El Cal 2.2

After almost four years on the market, *El Cal* has firmly established itself as the undisputed No.1 numerical/math tool on the Atari ST. This is not only because the other vendors abandoned the ST market as not lucrative enough. We believe that our program would hold its own on any market, including PC-DOS and Macintosh: just try to use Mathematica or MathCad to solve any of your daily math problems and you will understand why.

Since the introduction of *El Cal 1.0* early in 1989, we have developed a dedicated user base in about 20 countries of the world (and this without a distribution network!) Many of the users are offering us various suggestions for improvements and additional features, and we listen: the program went through 15 updates or upgrades incorporating most of what our users wanted.

Features. *El Cal* features range from very simple, useful in any tasks exceeding checkbook balancing, to quite advanced, not available in any Atari ST program. A few cannot be found on any program, on any computer (and if they are, they're much more difficult to use). Here is just a short list:

☆ A Parsing Calculator: an expression is entered as a whole and then computed (or otherwise manipulated). It can be then reviewed, modified and computed again. Calculation results are stored in variables, which, in turn, can be used in other expressions.

☆ Up to 20 expressions can be defined at any time and you can switch freely between them.

☆ Expression sets can be stored to disk.

☆ Ten variables are provided; for each, up to five old values are remembered.

☆ Calculations can be echoed to a printer or to a disk file.

☆ 36 standard functions: trigonometric, hyperbolic, logarithmic, exponential, roots, Euler's Gamma and Beta, factorial, combinations, etc.

☆ 44 statistical distribution functions: differential, integral and inverse integral for eight distributions: Normal, Student t, Snedecor F, Chi square, Poisson, Binomial, Gamma and Beta

☆ 4 random number generators for four distributions: Uniform, Normal, Gamma and Beta

☆ 12 user-defined functions

☆ 3 conditional functions (as e.g. "if a > 0 return a else b")

☆ Unit conversion (e.g.pound-force to Newtons) with user-extensible list; basic physical constants.

☆ Definite integrals: compute an integral of f(x) over a given interval (a,b)

☆ Derivatives: compute a derivative df(x)/dx at a given x.

☆ Zeros of functions: in a given interval (a,b) find an x for which f(x) = 0.

☆ Polynomial roots: you can compute (closed-form) real and complex roots of square, cubic, and quartic equations with real coefficients.

☆ Function optimization—a feature hard to get for any price, on any computer platform. *El Cal* will find (if possible) a maximum or minimum of a function defined by the user. The function can have up to nine arguments.

☆ Systems of (up to 10) non-linear equations are solved using the Newton algorithm.

☆ Differential equations: systems of up to 10 ODE can be solved (self-adaptive Runge-Kutta method) with or without plotting, with user-defined accuracy.

☆ Function plotting: any and all of the 20 expressions can be plotted on screen (full or window). Plots can be stored on disk for later image manipulation and for use in DTP programs. They can be also overlaid over previously drawn ones.

☆ Plot options: linear or logarithmic x- or y-scale (any combination), automatic range adjustment, digital coordinate readout, zooming in by dragging a rubber band.

☆ Linear algebra: operations on vectors and square matrices of up to 10*10. Operations include: matrix and vector algebra (+, -, *, dot-product) and matrix transposition and inversion.

☆ Systems of simultaneous linear equations (up to 10).

☆ Statistical data processing: X or XY data; a windowed browser/editor. Arithmetic operations on data columns are possible (e.g. "make all y-values equal to x+log(x) plus a random factor"). Data can be stored on disk, and ASCII files from other programs can be used.

☆ Simple statistical operations on one-dimensional (X) data sets (with plotting of the results): mean, standard deviation, histograms (with auto-ranging).

☆ Testing a histogram fit to any distribution: a sum of squares or sum of absolute deviations is computed.

☆ Fitting data with any distribution function with up to nine free parameters (find a PC or Mac program doing this!); least chi-square or maximum likelihood method.

☆ Statistical operations on two-dimensional (XY) data sets, with or without point weights or errors (with plotting).

☆ Linear regression and correlation (slope, intercept, correlation coefficient, confidence interval for the line and for its parameters).

☆ Polynomial regression of up to the sixth degree.

☆ Fitting the data points with any function with up to nine free parameters—by minimizing the sum of squared or absolute deviations.

As you can see, the list of features is impressive; ranging from useful in higher grades of the high school to applicable in advanced scientific and engineering work. We also believe that the user interface is easy and intuitive. The program has on-line help and comes with a printed, 80-page manual. We offer technical support via GEnie and CompuServe.

Min Cal. A companion product, *Min Cal*, is a fairly simple (in comparison, at least) desktop accessory calculator, based on *El Cal* and sharing its extensive function set.

In spite of its simplicity, *Min Cal* can be very useful in calculating more complicated formulae, and its statistical distribution functions are unmatched by any program or calculator (except *El Cal*, of course).

Ordering Information. *El Cal* V 2.2 (October 1992) was written by Dr. J. Andrzej Wrotniak. It is a numerical math toolbox for scientific and engineering applications. *El Cal* is recommended for scientists, engineers, college and (senior) high school students. Runs on any Atari ST, STe, Mega, TT, or Falcon with monochrome or color monitor. One megabyte of memory recommended, although not required.

Our mail order prices for *El Cal* ($63) and *Min Cal* ($15) include postage within the continental U.S. Deduct $6 from the total when ordering both products. The price of *El Cal* includes one update. Send checks or money orders to Debonair Software, P.O. Box 521166, Salt Lake City, UT 84152-1166.

Medical Designs Software Announces MultiWriter

The tradition of *ST Writer Elite* lives on in *MultiWriter*, a fully GEM-based word processor completely compatible with MultiTOS. Like *ST Writer Elite*, *MultiWriter* runs in all ST and TT resolutions, and still maintains the speed advantage of not being WYSIWYG. In addition, it is configurable in three languages (English, German, and Spanish), has multiple on-screen font sizes, and permits viewing the complete formatted document in print preview, utilizing GEM bold, italics and underline emulations on your monitor.

This is the first word processor that I know of that allows importing files in *ST Writer Elite* (the default), *1st Word 1.06*, *Word Writer ST*, and *Atari WordPerfect 4.1* formats, and can output files in those formats, as well as in ASCII. *MultiWriter* also supports the Atari clipboard.

The default text buffer size is configurable (from 200K up to full RAM memory), as are tabs, margin settings, background screen color, and other format line settings. Smaller buffer sizes can be selected manually for those with cramped memory space. Menu items are in color for those with color monitors. The windows are moveable, permitting viewing of other processes in a multitasking environment. *MultiWriter* is priced at $69.95 + $3.00 shipping and handling (WA residents add 8.2% sales tax), and includes Tutorial, Reference Guide, and Quick Reference Guide.

Medical Designs Software; 21701 76th Ave. W., #206, Edmonds, WA 98026; Orders: (206) 742-2032. GEmail: B.NOONAN or BPENNER.

Marcel Announces New Word Processor

Marcel Software of California is pleased to announce the upcoming release of its new word processing program. *Marcel Word Processor* is a GEM-based, user-friendly, budget-priced program especially suited for writers, authors, journalists, and students. In addition to standard text editing and on-screen styles, *Marcel* offers: user-defined file templates, instant-access writer's note pad (saved with file, but not printed or exported), easy accented-character entry, word count, easy keyboard selection of clauses, sentences, and paragraphs, word erase, date insert, and a 50,000-word spell checker with a choice of American or British spellings. There is even an alarm clock.

All frequently used commands have keyboard equivalents. Lines of text may be programmed into the ten function keys—they are saved in a file and automatically loaded into memory. *Marcel* will read just about any kind of file (preserving as much of the original format and text styles as possible). *Marcel* can export in the following formats: RTF (the DOS/Mac industry standard), *1st Word*, and several ASCII varieties. Printer support includes Epson, HP DeskJet and LaserJet, and others. Users can create their own printer drivers by editing a simple file. *Marcel* runs on any Atari/TOS machine with 512MB RAM and one single-sided drive.

Marcel will be displaying their new program in the Marcel booth at the Sacramento Atari Expo, March 13-14. Copies of *Marcel* will be available for purchase there at a special introductory price. *Marcel* will initially be offered through mail order. Domestic and international distribution is planned for late summer. The suggested list price is expected to be under $50. Marcel is a recent start-up company owned by Doug McCasland, who has been in the computer business since 1979.

TOAD to Distribute STraight FAX!

Toad Computers is proud to announce that it has acquired the exclusive worldwide distribution and marketing rights to the *STraight FAX!* The *STraight FAX!* is the premier send and receive FAX program for the Atari ST, TT, and Falcon. With it, you can send and receive fax documents to or from any Group III, Class 2 compatible FAX machine or FAX modem. *STraight FAX!* requires only a 1MB Atari ST, a Class 2 FAX modem and a double-sided drive.

The *STraight FAX!* is written by Charles Smeton of NewSTar Technology Management. NewSTar will continue to add new features to the *STraight FAX!*, and will develop other related software packages.

Toad computers will provide technical support and upgrade assistance to *STraight FAX!* users, and will also be marketing the product aggressively in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Toad Computers and NewSTar Technology **strongly** suggest that all legitimate owners of the *STraight FAX!* send in their registration cards immediately. Toad Computers can only provide complete technical support to registered users.

The current version of *STraight FAX!* is 1.06. Owners of previous versions may upgrade to version 1.06 by sending $2 to Toad computers along with their original master disk. To upgrade to a version 1.06 manual, please send $5 to Toad Computers along with the cover from the old manual.

Atari's FONT GDOS package is available through Toad Computers to registered owners of *STraight FAX!* The cost of the three-disk set is $10. A scanner driver program for use with the *STraight FAX!* to allow direct scanning from a Navarone/Canon fullpage flat bed or sheet feed scanner is also available from Toad Computers for $19.95.

Joppa Computer Products (Joppa Software Development) is no longer involved with the *STraight FAX!* and they ask that all upgrade and technical support questions be directed to Toad Computers instead.

STraight FAX! retails for $89.95. Current owners of *STraightFAX!* should send registration cards to: NewSTar

Technology Management, P.O. Box 122, Columbia, MD 21045. For upgrade information, technical support, or to order a copy of *STraight FAX!*, contact: Toad Computers 570-F Ritchie Highway, Severna Park, MD 21146. Technical Support/Upgrades: (410) 544-6943 (voice); (410) 544-1329 (FAX). Orders only: (800) 448-TOAD. No technical support will be given on the 800 line.

Ditek Launches DynaCADD 2D

Ditek International announced today *DynaCADD 2D* for the Atari ST and TT computers. The package includes both versions and is now available. The Atari Falcon version will be available in January 1993. *DynaCADD 2D* is the 2D portion of Ditek's powerful 2D/3D Computer Aided Design and Drafting Solution that has been on the market for the past two years. According to Oren Asher, President of Ditek, *DynaCADD 2D* will fill a specific market niche, "what we offer is a feature-rich, 2D design environment for under $300 that competes with, has more features and is much easier to use than anything out there. A significant portion of the market designs primarily in 2D. What these designers want is easy to use, high-level 2D functionality at the most reasonable price. *DynaCADD 2D* offers exactly the same comprehensive 2D functionality as our full 2D/3D version. Not one single 2D capability has been omitted. This new product typifies our sensitivity to the market and is being offered in response to many requests. If a designer only requires our 2D functionality for the meantime, we are more than willing to make it available. One can always take advantage of the 3D capabilities offered in our other version later on."

Features such as on-line help, context-sensitive documentation and a well organized and intuitive graphical user interface make *DynaCADD 2D* extremely easy to learn and use. *DynaCADD 2D* accurately sends all or any portion of any drawing at any scale, including best fit, to all popular pen plotters, dot matrix printers, laser printers, PostScript printers or disk files. A MAKEPLOT utility is included to create or change any plotter driver. A full Vector Font Editor is included to create new or edit existing characters or fonts.

Ditek's head office is located at 2800 John Street, Unit 15, Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 0E2 Tel: (416) 479-1990, Fax: (416) 479-1882. We can also be reached on GEnie at DITEK.

DynaCADD is a registered trademark of Ditek International. All other brand and product names are trademarks and registered trademarks of their respective companies.

German Atari Journal Ceases Publishing

The last issue of the German *Atari Journal* magazine appeared on the 11th of December 1992. The magazine, which billed itself as "The Specialist Periodical for Atari ST" was published by Heim Verlag in Frankfurt. The publication, which had been publishing for three years, originally appeared as *Atari PD Journal* in keeping with its strong interest in promoting PD and shareware offerings.

Heim Verlag also operated an extensive disk library service, and retail store, and a mail order outlet. In addition, Heim Verlag was the exclusive software and hardware distributor for products such as *That's Write* and *PC/AT-Speed*. It is not yet clear which, if any, components are expected to continue operations.

While the publisher cited "the current situation in the Atari market" as the driving force behind the decision, *Atari Journal's* U.S. correspondent cited diminution of the German user base attended by a decline in advertising revenues as contributing factors.

CodeHead Announces Calligrapher 3

CodeHead Technologies and Working Title US are proud to announce the release of *Calligrapher 3!* If you're already familiar with *Calligrapher*, you know it's a powerful, intuitive, graphics-based word processor. Now, *Calligrapher 3* adds terrific new features, streamlines the installation procedure, is compatible with the Falcon030 and MultiTOS, and no longer uses GDOS!

This announcement describes the enhancements and changes in *Calligrapher 3*, as well as the procedure for upgrading to version 3. If you are unfamiliar with *Calligrapher* and its features, you can obtain an excellent overview by trying out the *Calligrapher 3* demo package, available by calling CodeHead Technologies (213) 386-5735, or by downloading the demo from any of the popular online networks.

Product Enhancements. GDOS (G+Callig) and Line__Arc have been built into *Calligrapher* itself, so there is no longer any special startup disk and nothing is required in the AUTO folder. This makes it much more compatible with other GDOS programs since there is no overlap, and also makes installation and setup MUCH easier and less trouble-prone.

If you have a hard disk and 2Mb, *Calligrapher* displays vector fonts on screen. The new edition caches screen fonts more intelligently, speeding up the opening of documents and moving through documents that contain vector fonts.

The new version supports ESC−P2 printers (Epson Dot Matrix printers that support 360 dpi compressed mode), is compatible with MultiGem and MultiTOS, and has an easy−to−use install program.

Templates, documents with the extension CAT, are treated as base documents. (similar to stationery documents on the Macintosh.) Also there is a default template that is loaded when *Calligrapher* is first started. This allows you, for example, to save the ruler settings for your default ruler.

The FlexText module now allows you to USE ANY URW typeface, not just the included ones. On a TT, *Calligrapher* now moves its code into TT RAM to run 30% faster. Import/export of Rich Text Format (RTF) files has been added to the import module. The integral symbol and brackets in *Calligrapher's* mathematical formulae have been improved. There are new commands in formulae to cover set symbols, and things such as products. Equivalents have been added in the interactive formula editor.

When you adjust markers on the ruler (margins, tabs, etc.), a vertical line is drawn to help you gauge positions. Mark a section and increase or decrease all font sizes proportionally. Keyboard shortcuts have been added to the interactive formula editor. A new program allows you to change *Calligrapher's* internal setup. This allows adjustments to its memory, printer and other internal details.

The supplementary language disks have been improved. Spanish includes a Catalan dictionary and a Spanish thesaurus. German has a German dictionary and thesaurus. Italian has a Catalan dictionary. A triple click on a paragraph selects the whole paragraph.

When running under a multitasking operating system, the disk-based clipboard is switched on, allowing you to cut and paste text dynamically between applications. Two printers are supported at the same time, allowing you to switch between them at print time. A separation line has been added between footnotes and the body of text.

Calligrapher 3 remembers the pathname when inserting multiple graphics into a document.

There is a driver for the Ricoh 1200 laser printer at 400dpi.

System Requirements. *Calligrapher 3 Professional* requires 1 Mb of RAM and a floppy disk. *Calligrapher 3 Gold* requires 1 Mb and a hard disk. Version 3 requires more memory than version 2, so if your documents are at the limit of memory with version 2, you will be over the limit with version 3.

New Fonts. There are 20 new URW typefaces available, number 67 through 86. These new fonts will only work with version 3 of *Calligrapher*. Previously purchased font disks can be re-installed to work with *Calligrapher 3* by using a new install program included with the upgrade.

Items Removed. Some things have been removed due to the changes in the way *Calligrapher* operates. Bitmap GDOS printer fonts are no longer supported. Only URW outline fonts will be output to your printer. Sizefont, Editfont, and Assign Edit have been dropped as they are no longer relevant. The ability to print to disk in PTD format has been removed, along with DiskPrnt. FlexText no longer runs as a separate program, due to the lack of GDOS/G+Callig support. It must be run as a PAK. Some changes have been made to reduce the amount of memory it consumes. (It can run on a 1 Mb system).

Upgrade Procedure. When you upgrade to *Calligrapher 3*, you're also entitled to one FREE URW outline font disk (worth $34.95). And since the new version of *Calligrapher* only works with the URW outline fonts, any additional font families that you purchase along with the upgrade are only $25 (a $10 discount). The upgrade price from version 2 to version 3 is $45. The upgrade price from *Calligrapher Professional* version 2 to *Calligrapher Gold* version 3 is $100. The upgrade price (either $45 or $100) includes ONE FREE URW FONT DISK, worth $34.95. Any one of the existing typefaces may be chosen, including the new fonts mentioned above.

The upgrade is available to anyone who owns the Working Title US (CodeHead) version of *Calligrapher* and has received a registered disk 5 from us. The upgrade may be purchased by phone or E-Mail by supplying us with a credit card number (including expiration date) and a shipping address. It is not necessary to return your original disks. The upgrade may also be ordered by mail with a check or money order. The upgrade includes five disks plus the free font disk and printed documentation for the new additions. Additional URW font disks may be purchased with the upgrade at the price of $25 each. Shipping and handling charges for the upgrade are $3 US, $4 Canada, and $6 overseas.

Working Title US, a division of CodeHead Technologies, is the official US importer of Working Title products.

Atari Shows

CeBIT, March 1993

CeBIT, the world's largest computer show with 5,000 exhibitors in 20 halls, is held annually in Hannover, Germany. Atari traditionally struts its newest wares there, usually before it's seen in the USA or anywhere else. Third party developers also use this show to introduce new hardware and software, so expect a wave of news from CeBIT every year. Atari Corp and the IAAD coordinate cross-oceanic contacts to promote worldwide marketing of Atari products, and this show is an annual touchstone of that effort. Contact Bill Rehbock at Atari Corp for information at 408-745-2000.

Sacramento Atari Computer Exposition, March 13th-14th, 1993

The Sacramento Atari ST Users Group (SST) is proud to announce the Sacramento Atari Computer Exposition (SAC Expo) March 13th and 14th at the Towe Ford Museum in Sacramento, California.

The show will feature many of the big names in the Atari world and will be open both days from 10 am to 6 pm. Tickets are just $6 a day or both days for $10. The show is being held in the special events area of the Towe Ford Museum, home of the world's most complete antique Ford automobile collection. As an added bonus, admission to the museum is free when you attend the Expo.

Getting to the show is easy. The museum is located at the intersection of Interstates 5 and 80, just 15 minutes from the Sacramento Metropolitan Airport. There are plenty of great hotel accommodations available; to make reservations contact Mark or Dell at Sports Leisure Travel (800) 321-4758.

Vendor packets have been mailed to the developers and vendors contacted by SST at the Glendale show. If you would like further information regarding booth space please contact SAC Expo at the number listed.

Nick Langdon (Vendor Coordinator), C/O SST, P.O. Box 214892, Sacramento, Ca 95821-0892. (916) 723-6425 (voice). GEnie: M.WARNER8. ST-Keep BBS (SST) (916) 729-2968

The Glendale Show, September 18-19, 1993.

The Glendale Show returns with the Southern California Atari Computer Faire, V.7.0, in suburban Los Angeles, California. This has been the year's largest domestic Atari event, year after year. Contact John King Tarpinian at the user group HACKS at 818-246-7286 for information.

Atari Vendors/Clubs:

Send announcements of your Atari products or Atari shows to Current Notes, 122 N Johnson Rd, Sterling, VA 20164. Send E-mail to GEnie: JOE.WATERS or CompuServe: 74005,1270.

STARTING BLOCK
by
Richard Gunter

ZIPping and ZOOing

Happy New Year!

Last issue was the first of a two-parter on two file compression/archiving methods that aren't in wide use on the Atari platform: ZIP and ZOO. We discussed *STZIP*, which appeared to be the best of the available Atari programs. Since I wrote that article, there have been some developments in the ZIP arena.

ZIP Updates

STZIP 2.0 has been replaced (just within the last few days on CompuServe) with *STZIP 2.1*. The CIS file name is ZIP21.LZH, and it can be found in Library 4 of the ATARIPRO forum. According to the documentation, this version fixes the glitches I noted in version 2.0, and includes several new features. I haven't had the chance to work with it very much yet.

A potentially serious incompatibility problem surfaced when I attempted to unZIP (using the IBM OS/2 *PKUNZIP* program) a file created with *STZIP 2.0*. The attempt failed, with the OS/2 program reporting CRC errors throughout.

You may recall that *STZIP* claims compatibility with the new "deflate" algorithm, which wasn't available for the IBM-compatibles at that time. My file was created using the older algorithms, and should have worked. Consider this a caveat if you're planning to ZIP a file on the Atari for an IBM user. *STZIP* remains a good choice for unZIPping files created on the IBM platform with the older *PKZIP*.

PKWARE has begun distributing the new *PKZIP 2.04c* program and is starting to take some hits from CompuServe users. Some of the user reports complain about Windows crashes, *PKZIP* grabbing a block of high memory without releasing it (ever), and lack of backward compatibility. I plan to get hold of the new version for ST versus IBM compatibility tests. I'm especially interested in determining whether the IBM version of the "deflate" algorithm can be properly extracted by the ST program. Don't hold your breath; I don't have my PC ... yet.

The ZOO System

ZOO was originally written by Rahul Dhesi, and is popular on Internet and in Europe. Except for Internet, it's not used much in the US. I'm told that one reason for its use on Internet has to do with Government rules concerning copyrights (both *ARC* and *PKWARE* are copyrighted).

ZOO is available on many BBSes and the major on-line services. The CompuServe file name is `ZOO214.LZH` for the latest version.

ZOO is a TTP (TOS Takes Parameters) program, requiring a command string. Run it with no parameter string, and it displays a few lines indicating how to get more detailed help, as well as a list of the "novice" commands. The download file contains a manual.

ZOO supports two distinct sets of commands: novice and expert. The novice command syntax is fairly simple.

```
zoo -cmd archive [file]
```

where `cmd` is a command verb, which is spelled out as add, freshen, delete, update, extract, etc.; `archive` is the file identifier of the ZOO archive (the compressed file); `file` is an optional list of file names to be operated on.

The expert command set is pretty hairy. The general syntax is

```
zoo {cmd}[modifiers] archive [file]
```

where `{cmd}` are command letters (one or more may appear). There are 17 possibilities, and they are case-sensitive. `[modifiers]` is a list of command modification letters (again, multiple modifiers may appear). There are 30 modifiers, and all are case-sensitive.

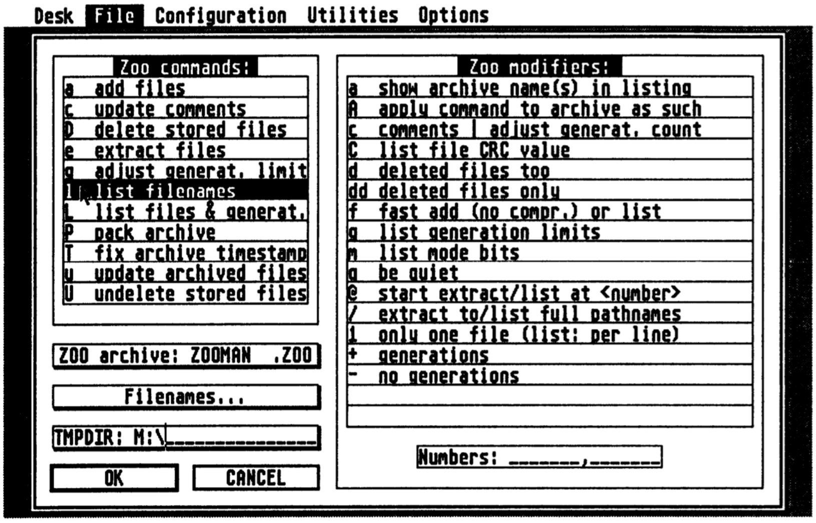
Yecch. The "expert" commands are more trouble than they're worth for the casual user. Most US users are most likely to be more interested in simply extracting a ZOO-compressed file obtained from some other source, such as an on-line service or an Internet download. To this end, the "novice" commands should be quite sufficient.

The Current Directory

One flaw in the ZOO system is that the program pretty much insists on extracting to the "current" directory. This will usually turn out to be the directory containing the .ZOO archive file. That's a nuisance, and I didn't see help in the manual for directing the extracted files elsewhere.

Shell Programs

Regular readers will be aware that I prefer graphics "shell" interfaces for programs of this type. Charles Johnson has set the standard with his *ARCSHELL* program; unfortunately, his program supports only the two most popular systems (*ARC* and *LHARC*).



ZOO archive: ZOOMAN .ZOO

TMPDIR: M:\_______________

Numbers: _______,_______

STZIP has its own graphics interface, and it seems to work pretty well for ZIP/unZIP operations. I found two shell programs for *ZOO*, and one of these may be suitable if you intend to do anything more than simple "novice" extractions.

A Really "Cute" Graphics Shell - ARCGSH

This shareware program was written by Rainer Klute of Germany; it supports four archivers: *ARC*, *ZOO*, and a few oddballs (*UUD* and *UUE*). I performed one test with the ARC option, and the program bombed out with my copy of *ARC 6.02*; looks like a problem there, but it didn't bother me because I was only interested in *ZOO* and prefer Johnson's shell for *ARC*. Also, I didn't try any of the complicated *ZOO* commands and modifiers. The simple stuff did work, though. This program basically allows you to use most of the more complicated options of *ZOO* without having to remember the exact syntax. You will have to remember what all those options are. With *ZOO*, that isn't easy.

Klute states in the documentation that it is possible to "trick" *ZOO* into extracting files to a separate directory, but I never got his trick to work right. The first illustration shows the display you get for the *ZOO* format and list option. Each command choice causes a new set of modifiers to be listed on the right side of the screen.

ARCGSH has one of those annoying dialog boxes that pops up from time to time to solicit a shareware payment; the author states that he'll tell you how to turn this off. The shareware fee is $15.

EDM Shell

EDM Shell is a shareware program by David Holmes; it supports *ARC*, *ZIP*, *ZOO*, and two *LZH* programs (both the lh1 and lh5 styles). This program's shareware fee is $10.

EDM Shell has its own file selector, but allows you to use your system file selector (I use *UIS III*) instead. This program is a bit more flexible than *ARCGSH* in that it supports more archivers. If you find that you like it, this could be your only shell for all the common archiving methods.

It won't allow you access to all the commands and options of most of the programs it's calling (obvious, when you look at *ZOO*), but it does appear to handle most of the basic operations.

This program didn't blow up on me, which is a plus. However, it, too, is unable to get *ZOO* to extract files to a desired destination. Didn't even bother to go through the motions of prompting for a destination folder.

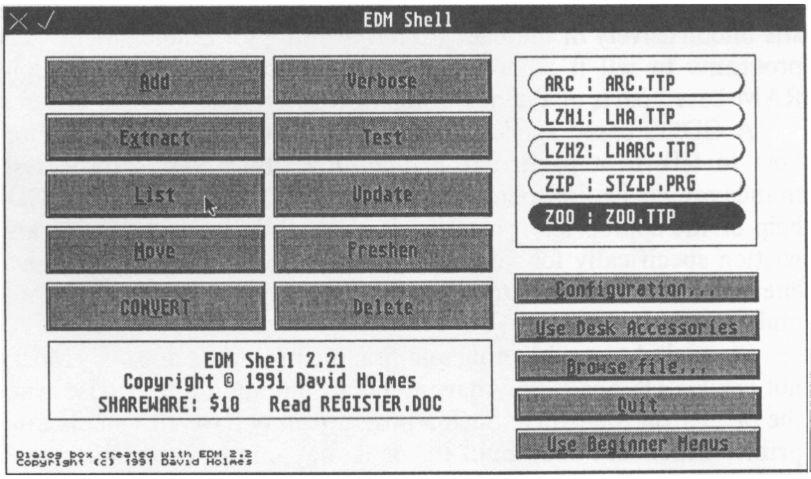
Wrapup

There are possible compatibility problems with ZIP these days; *STZIP* has not been proven to be fully compatible with the IBM programs, either the old or the newly released. For IBM to Atari extractions, *STZIP* does work with the old IBM version. With its graphics interface, a shell program is unnecessary.

ZOO is overly complicated, and I intend to use it only when I can't avoid it. Its lack of destination control is another nuisance that I wouldn't get used to at all. For occasional use, a graphics shell is probably unnecessary; the novice commands should provide most people with sufficient functionality.

The shell programs may be to your taste, especially if you use more than a couple of the archivers supported by one of them. Of the two mentioned above, *EDM Shell* is the more generally useful, and seems fairly stable.

So long till next time, and happy computing!



EDM Shell 2.21
Copyright © 1991 David Holmes
SHAREWARE: $10 Read REGISTER.DOC

Dialog box created with EDM 2.2
Copyright (c) 1991 David Holmes

ST TOOLBOX

by J. Andrzej Wrotniak

Don't Be Afraid of GDOS

Tuning up Your *Publisher 2 ST*

(Part 1 of a Series)

After my review of *Publisher 2 ST* last April, some readers suggested that I write more about installing extra fonts for this program. At that moment I wasn't sure whether *Publisher* would really stay in our market, as there was a lot of confusion about who (if anyone at all) would be selling it on the US market. But now the situation has stabilized; *Publisher 2* is distributed here by ABC Solutions from Canada. They are quite serious about it, and most of the dealers have the program in stock.

So here it is, the first of a series of articles on customizing your font sets. However, before we really start, some practical introduction to GDOS will be useful. Note that I do not consider myself a GDOS wizard; this will be rather a layman-to-layman talk.

GDOS: Not As Bad As Some People Say

GDOS is a part of (or an add-on to) the Atari ST operating system. It is not burned in the TOS ROMs; it comes on a disk instead. Most programs using GDOS come with a copy of it, and there is also a very good replacement (with extra features, but 100% compatible) from the CodeHeads, the *G+Plus*, well worth the extra expense.

GDOS is a program through which the graphic output to various devices (usually printers) is channeled. This also includes text in fonts different from the ones built into your printer (as a matter of fact, a page of GDOS text is just a page of graphics from the printer's point of view).

GDOS is a memory-resident program. Placed in the \AUTO\ folder, it runs and installs itself in memory when your computer is booting up. Then it sits unobtrusively in the background, waiting for other programs to tell it what to do, very much like the RAM-based parts of the operating system.

A GDOS-based application does not have to know how to talk to a particular printer; its output commands are device-independent. It is up to GDOS (with help of the appropriate *printer driver*, which has to be written specifically for your type of printer) to translate those commands into something the printer will understand.

Some desktop publishing and graphic programs do not use GDOS at all; they have to do all the talking to the printer on their own. Such a program may have all printer-dependent code built in, or it may come with its own proprietary printer drivers, usually not usable by other applications.

The output quality of non-GDOS applications may or may not be better than that of GDOS-based ones. This usually depends on the fonts included with the system, less on the system itself.

Putting aside output to devices using the *PostScript* page description language (few of us can afford these at home), GDOS treats characters of text as miniature images, consisting of single black or white dots, or pixels. These images are stored in *GDOS font files* and are used by the system as needed. This means that for each font face (like Sans Serif, Times Roman or Madison) and for each font size (measured in *points*, with 10 or 12 points being the size used for typical documents) you have to have two font files: one appropriate for your printer and one for your screen resolution.

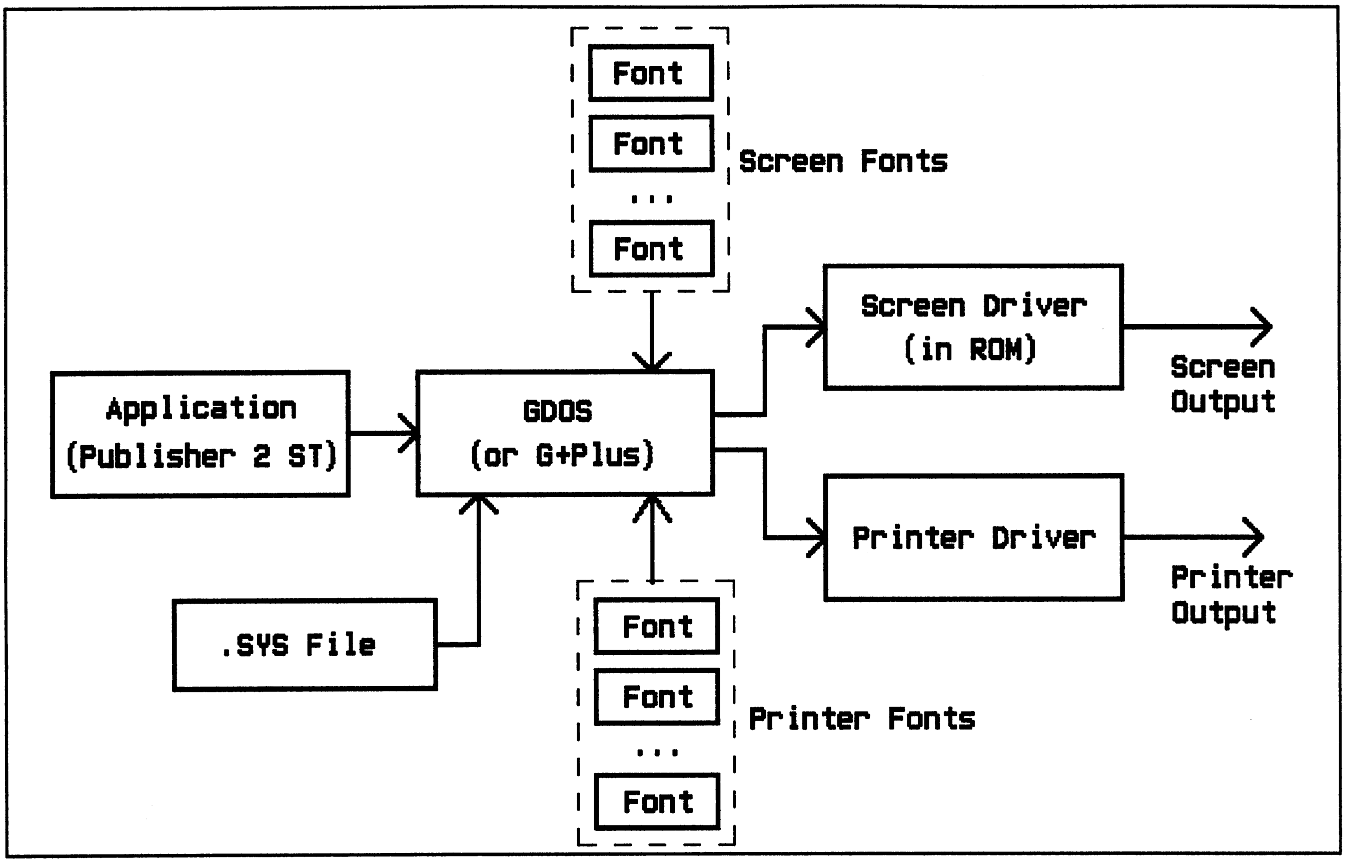
The Hated .SYS File

GDOS has to know what font files it has available and where to find them, and this is why we need a *font configuration file*, usually (but not necessarily) called ASSIGN.SYS. The *Publisher*, or any other GDOS-based application, will get the list of available font faces and sizes from GDOS.

The ASSIGN.SYS file is read by GDOS just once, on the boot-up, and it is expected to reside in the root directory of your boot drive. This means that a list of fonts (and devices) cannot be changed without re-booting your system. When switching between applications using different font sets, or when tweaking your .SYS file, this may become quite annoying. The replacement *G+Plus* allows us to bypass this unreasonable limitation, allowing you to assign different .SYS files to different applications, or to load a selected .SYS file just before running a program. Other than that (and some less relevant improvements), whatever we say about GDOS is true about *G+Plus* as well.

In any case, your success in customizing your applications to a given printer and to a given font set depends mostly on your ability to prepare the right .SYS file.

Most of the problems with GDOS-based programs arise when we do not understand how all the components are interconnected and how they work together. Without this understanding, we may at best try to



memorize, blindly, the various step-by-step procedures or depend on various installation programs, which may or may not do what we want to be done.

I am saying this just in case you skimmed through the previous sections, waiting until I got to the "real how-to stuff." Go back, read again; a small investment in understanding the principles will make your how-to knowledge much more useful and adaptable.

The following diagram illustrates how the different parts of the system work together.

How the *Publisher* Uses GDOS Fonts

When the *Publisher* runs, it first asks GDOS what font faces and sizes are available, for both screen and printer. The font file names are irrelevant, as each font is identified inside its file by the (supposedly) unique face number and a descriptive name, in addition to the point size.

Font face numbers have to be consistent within your system. *Publisher* does not actually check how a given font looks, or how large it actually is; all information it has is from the "nominal" one, embedded inside the font file.

For example, if you have two font files in different sizes, both designed as Old English (and looking alike) but with different font face numbers, the *Publisher* will recognize them as two different font faces.

The font files generated by the *Publisher* installation program have the numbers and nominal sizes assigned in a proper manner, but when you are adding fonts from other sources to the system, you have to be sure that this information is correct.

For this you will need a font editing program giving you access to the nominal font information. I am using *Fontz!*, but the freeware *GEM Font Editor (GEMFED)* also allows you to view and modify the face number, name and point size.

Two fonts are treated by *Publisher* in a special way, and both seem to be required in any setup for this program.

The first one is Sans (a look-alike of the popular Swiss or Helvetica), with a face number of 2. Its 10-point version is used as a default for the Body Text style.

The second is Zapf Dingbats (replacing Bullets from Version 1 of the program), used primarily for paragraph markers in the Bullet style (or any others of this kind).

Any font face/size combination to be used by the *Publisher* has to have two entries in the .SYS file: one for the screen and one for the printer. The corresponding font files have to reside in the indicated directory. Publisher will ignore the screen fonts without proper printer equivalents of the same face and size. On the other hand, a printer font without a screen equivalent will be printed out properly, but on the screen it will show as Swiss of the same (or next smaller) size.

Understanding Your GDOS Setup

Let us have a look at a minimum configuration ASSIGN.SYS; your file looks very much like this except that it is larger:

```
path = d:\fnt
03p screen.sys ; ST Medium
04p screen.sys ; ST High, 90dpi
san008rm.vga
san010rm.vga
san012rm.vga
san020rm.vga
zdb007rm.vga
zdb010rm.vga
zdb012rm.vga
zdb020rm.vga
21 epsonlq.elq ; Epson LQ, 180 dpi
san008rm.elq
san010rm.elq
san012rm.elq
san020rm.elq
zdb007rm.elq
zdb010rm.elq
zdb012rm.elq
zdb020rm.elq
```

The first line specifies where GDOS (or *G+Plus*, much more convenient) can find all the fonts. Here it is in the `D:\FNT` directory.

Any line starting from a number describes a device driver, and has to be followed by a list of font files for this device. In this case, I am not using a color monitor so there are no fonts specified for it. Two devices are supplied with fonts: a monochrome monitor and an Epson LQ (or compatible) printer. The printer driver is the `EPSONLQ.ELQ` file coming with the program (actually, I am using one bundled with another application) and it has to reside in the font directory. Do not try to find the screendriver there; the letter "p" following the number denotes that it is built into the system.

Now, the font files. As I have already mentioned, their names are irrelevant, but some naming convention will help in avoiding mistakes. Here I am using just two fonts: the Swiss and Zapf Dingbats. The files follow the naming convention used by the *Publisher 2* installation program: three letters denoting the font face, three digits describing the point size and "`rm`" telling that the font is upright (or Roman, having nothing to do with Times). The extension describes the device for which the fonts are suitable: "`elq`" means the Epson LQ (or my Panasonic KX-P1124) printer, while "`vga`" describes a monochrome screen (guess why).

Let me stress again, the file names are completely irrelevant, as long as the face numbers and sizes embedded inside the files make sense. (For example, font files coming with other programs usually have an .FNT extension, and device driver names end with a .SYS).

Note that each printer font file has its exact screen equivalent. This is the safest way to go.

Within a device group, the files may follow in any order, and the differences between upper- and lowercase in names are insignificant. Still, it makes sense to group fonts by faces, and in increasing point size order (I wonder why the *Publisher* installation program does not do it this way).

One of the most common sources of errors is that a font (or driver) listed in the .SYS file is not in the right directory (specified in the first line). The directory may contain other font or driver files, even if you are not using them at the moment.

The Font Width Tables

After the `.SYS` file has been modified, GDOS has to be made aware of the changes. This can be done only by re-booting the computer. (With *G+Plus* and its accompanying desktop accessory installed, re-booting is not necessary; just make sure that *G+Plus* actually reads the `.SYS` file when running any application depending on it).

After re-booting, run `FONTWID.APP`, the font width program. It will go through all listed font files and compute widths of all characters. Two files will be created in the process, `PUBLISH.WID` and `SCREEN.WID`, containing width tables for the printer and screen, respectively. They will be used by *Publisher* to space the printed characters properly. Forgetting to run the font width program is a common error, leading, in the best case, to funny printouts. Remember, you have to do it just once after having modified font files or their list in the `.SYS` file.

Our minimum setup contains fonts only up to 20 points in size. When you run *Publisher*, the font size dialog box will have sizes up to 40 points. The larger sizes, however, will be printed in a somewhat blocky manner, as they are obtained by enlarging every pixel from the original fonts into a 2x2 block of four pixels, with a corresponding loss of resolution.

Adding Extra Fonts

Now we would like to add some extra fonts to our setup (as created by your *Publisher* installation program, or as in the example above, does not matter).

First of all, we have to find the proper GDOS font files, by begging, stealing or borrowing (more on that, and how to use fonts designed for devices other than your printer, will follow in the second installment).

For any given font face we need two files, screen and printer, for every point size. Some fancy fonts are available in the public domain in at least one or two sizes; you may also use one of the font conversion programs available on the market (this also is another story).

Second, we have to make sure that the font face numbers are unique (i.e. different than those for other fonts already in the system) and the same for all sizes and for both devices. The *Publisher* manual contains a list of font numbers, and any checks or changes can be done with a font editor (as *Fontz!* or *GEMFED* mentioned above).

Once this is assured, you have to put the font files into the proper directory (where all the other fonts in the setup are), and then modify your `.SYS` file.

Let us assume that the font to add is Symbols (containing the whole Greek alphabet and other math characters) in just two sizes: 10 and 12 points. If the font file names follow the "new" *Publisher* convention, we will have to add just four lines to the `.SYS` file. In our example, two lines

```
sym010rm.vga
sym012rm.vga
```

should be appended to the screen section (immediately before the line starting from "21"), and two others

```
sym010rm.elq
sym012rm.elq
```

to the printer section (at the very end of the file). Now, reboot (only if you do not use *G+Plus* with its accessory), run the font width program, and that is it! When you run *Publisher*, the Symbols font in sizes of 10, 12, 20 and 24 points (the last two being the blocky doubled ones, remember!) will appear in the font face and size dialog.

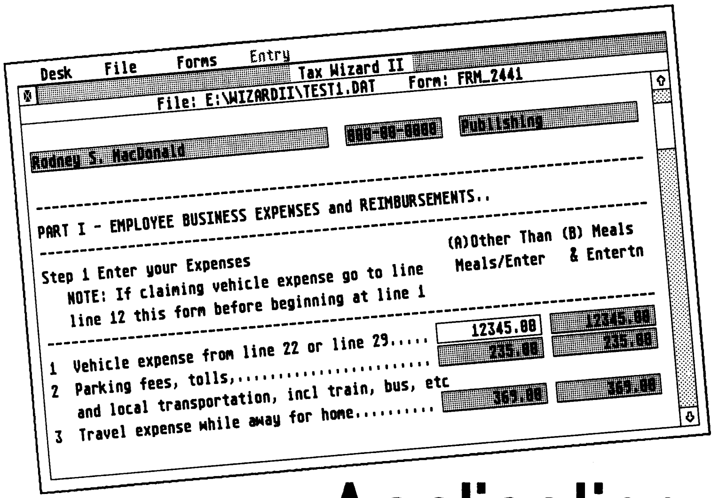
Before you start experimenting with your `.SYS` file, make a backup copy under some other name. This way, if anything goes wrong, you may rename the backup back, and easily restore everything to the original state (do not forget to re-run the font width program!). First of all, remember that there is nothing magic about GDOS and applications using it. If you follow the simple rules outlined above, customization of your *Publisher 2* will, indeed, be a breeze. (The original Version 1 was somewhat buggy here and sometimes would balk at perfectly kosher font setups, and moving to Version 2 made perfect sense; ABC Solutions offered reasonably priced upgrades).

In the next installment (March or April) we will go somewhat deeper into using fonts from various sources and understanding why your screen may sometimes show something different than your printer will actually print. In the meantime—happy tinkering!

■■■■■■■

TAX WIZARD II

in final testing stages of development



```
File: E:\WIZARDII\TEST1.DAT    Form: FRM_2441

Rodney S. MacDonald            000-00-0000    Publishing
-------------------------------------------------------------
PART I - EMPLOYEE BUSINESS EXPENSES and REIMBURSEMENTS..
-------------------------------------------------------------
                                          (A)Other Than (B) Meals
Step 1 Enter your Expenses                 Meals/Enter  & Entertn
  NOTE: If claiming vehicle expense go to line
  line 12 this form before beginning at line 1
-------------------------------------------------------------
                                           12345.00     12345.00
1  Vehicle expense from line 22 or line 29.....  235.00   235.00
2  Parking fees, tolls,.......................
   and local transportation, incl train, bus, etc
3  Travel expense while away for home.........   369.00   369.00
```

New TaxWizard II is in final testing and is being designed to provide a full GEM interface with improved forms scrolling, forms updating features, draft copy 1040 capability, and more forms (up to 40) for todays personal and small business tax returns for tax year 1992. We also will provide estimates to enable state form modules on request. Send your state forms and we will contact you. We will again have Tax Wizard II priced at $49.95 with a $10 discount to prior year registered owners. Shipping is extra and is planned for mid Jan93. Early Charge Card or check orders will not be activated until Tax Wizard II is shipped (unless you wish a 92 deduction for the program).

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Small World

OnLine Lynching

by: Dave Small

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Introduction

In the beginning was the modem. It allowed computers to talk to each other over telephone lines. Soon there were "Bulletin Boards," where people could call a central computer and post "notes," just like notes at your local supermarket ("Free Kittens To Good Home"). Then, increasingly sophisticated software allowed people to reply to specific notes, have different categories and areas for notes, and so forth. Finally, worldwide networks came on the scene, where multi-zillions of people could read and, if they wanted to, contribute to these notes.

The biggest current notes area I am aware of is the intertwine of USENET/Internet, where there's so much activity that I do not believe a human being, reading straight through at 9600 baud 24 hours a day, could read everything being "posted" (put onto disk storage). There is a fairly healthy Atari ST and 8-bit discussion area there.

In the USA, there are GEnie, CompuServe, Delphi, America Online, BIX, Prodigy, and I probably forgot someone that will e-mail me a nasty note.

I want to emphasize to you that a modem is *cheap* and that you should get one of these widgets. Plug it into your ST's serial port and your phone jack and see the world. Some services charge fees, others do not, and you may have to call long distance, but generally, for the "biggies," it's a free local call, and a per hour connect fee ($5/hr), or sometimes a flat rate.

Okay, end of introduction. What's happened by 1993 is that a massive amount of text information, programs, pictures, and whatnot are moving around through these networks. I have no count, but hundreds of thousands of people are on the systems I am on, and I'm sure InterNet alone takes us into millions.

The Good

A lot of neat stuff gets spread through the "nets," or "cyberspace," a term you use if you live in California (that is a joke). You can get programs, information, the latest news and rumors, all about what you want to chat about. I can download scorching 24-bit superb color pictures for Sandy to find and delete (*grin*). I can send out, for free distribution, a new version of Spectre 128 or GCR that does more neat things; in fact, all our last-minute "beta testing," final look-for-bugs stuff, is done online.

The Bad

A lot of bad info gets passed through the nets. Pompous individuals even collect some of it into "online magazines" and spread it. The rumors can be incredibly destructive. And when your potential audience is 100,000 people, say, the damage done is unbelievable. Let's say someone decides to cause me trouble,and puts a note online on how to "fix" the Spectre GCR a certain way. People will see the note, and some will try it. Then I get 10,000 phone calls, faxes, and, of-course, e-mails complaining that "my fix" doesn't work! (Yes, they blame *me*, not the person who posted the fix).

Atari is the subject of zillions of malicious rumors. Ask, say, Bob Brodie, who tries to monitor and stamp out little flames before they become forest fires of panic online on GEnie.

Other individuals post notes for pay. They'll write a vicious review of a product if they are not sent one free, which looks like blackmail to me. On the other hand, a developer can "buy" a glowing review, obviously written without even using the product, by sending a product for free to them. Or, they'll rip into a developer over some personal thing, or a dispute, and the developer sometimes never even sees his accuser if he is not on that network. As a fairly visible developer, I have seen these things with my own eyes and I know, as do most experienced online users, that they happen. I am not speaking hypothetically.

It is a particularly hard decision for a major online service to make concerning storing online magazines, where a LOT of money is made on, say, 1,500 readings of a given online magazine. With all the connect hours, that is big money. At what point do they say, "Look, this magazine is harmful," particularly when the line is blurred and grey (as it always is)? I would tend to err on the side of freedom of speech, always; heck, if people believe everything they read, they might as well buy *National Enquirer* and find out when Elvis will come back from his vacation.

I do hate to lay this on you, but the *Enquirer* has the biggest circulation in the USA. A massive amount of people buy, and believe, it.

Some individuals commit what I think of as fraud by going under pseudonyms for names. This, obviously, is one way to avoid taking the heat for saying something. In little BBS's, this happens all the time.

On major systems, big efforts are made to identify who you are, because you are paying ... and they want your credit card number, please. False ID is not welcome. Two major note-writers on GEnie pulled this.

This is a standard feature of the pirate on-line community (your "handle," like a CB handle, is *always* used instead of your name, lest the FBI smite thee.) I dug into the "Dark Side of The BBS World" in *Current Notes*, and if you'd like to blow yourself up by listing some incorrectly written directions to make a pipe bomb (as a kid did in San Diego, and got hurt badly), it's all there, pal.

I refer you to the twin articles in *Current Notes* a few summers back; the first was programs you could download to "phone phreak," or make free calls (a dying thing; the TelCo came down hard on the people doing this), and the second listed selected texts available from just one bulletin board (over 500 total).

Lest you think I'm kidding, the entire text to "Kitchen Improvised Plastic Explosives" is ready to download on many bulletin boards. (The bigger services would not *touch* something like that!) Anyway, it is copyright theft; K.I.P.S. it is text, typed in from a copyrighted book and for your information, whoever typed it in was not careful to make sure they got the ingredients right. I checked, since the publishing house is just north of me.

You really have to wonder when someone types in directions to make a detonator and *does not* tell you that when you mix ingredients A and B, Nitrogen Dioxide forms and bubbles off. This gas kills you. My brother, a pro chemist, tells me *just one* of its effects is to form fairly concentrated Nitric Acid in your lungs. He speaks of it with respect, and fear, like any competent chemist—you handle that stuff with an overpressure air mask, a fume hood, and someplace absolutely safe to dump it if a safety system fails. Make it in your basement and die.

Same goes for the nitroglycerin formula. Nothing is said about getting rid of any trace of acidity in the result; if you don't do that, you can join Alfred Nobel's brothers in itty bitty pieces. (Nobel stabilized nitroglycerin into dynamite, made a fortune, and established the well-known Nobel Prize, much as the Rhodes scholarship comes from the fellow who established Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.)

I feel that there are some major sickos out there who don't mind telling kids how to do extremely dangerous things, or things that are positively death-dealing.

The Ugly

The UGLY? It gets worse than THAT? Yup. I feel grim telling you about it.

The worst, to me, is an on-line lynching. This is where someone starts a panic, it doesn't get stamped out *fast* (why do you think developers often read the nets *nightly*?) and suddenly, someone has a "virtual" rope around his neck with the required 13 turns on the noose. They are *lynched*, often with no opportunity to defend themselves, and often over something that is completely wrong.

What *is it* about a computer, and a modem? I have thousands of hours online, and have seen people write the most incredibly vicious notes about someone else. They are notes that would *never, ever* be said in person. But some dreadful thing about this technology allows people to unleash some dark part of themselves. I don't believe 3/4 of what I read of how wonderful it will be when we're all connected online (say, ISDN in your telephone), just because I know how some people hide behind their terminal and snipe.

I have seen people lynched. One Mac lynching made a national magazine not too long ago. A shareware product had a time limit put into it; in other words, after a certain date, it would not function. Well, it was popular. One day, it quit. Panic erupted. People claimed it was a virus or destructive, that they had a "right" to use it as long as they wanted, and so forth. It got so out of hand that someone compared the author's initials to chemical symbols, and noted they were potentially explosive chemicals. Give me a break!

I was personally lynched a few years ago when I made the grievous "mistake" of hooking up USENET and GEnie in a limited, experimental manner. A gal in San Diego went *absolutely ballistic*, posted notes all over USENET about how I was "profiting" from all this, could not be stopped, would not be willing to stop even if I was contacted, and so forth. I didn't know her from Eve, yet, from reading her notes, I discovered I was an evil, profiteering, unstoppable Atilla.

Trouble was, I did not see this *in time*. I did not read the right places, and my USENET link was far "downstream." (It took days). By this time, a chief administrator of the USENET offered to shut down the Atari ST area immediately if I didn't turn off the link.

Talk about good intentions...

When I saw the fooraw, I pulled the plug *immediately*. (We didn't make any money on it; we *lost* money, because of the development time and the super-minimal amount of data moved around.) The gal who screamed in so many places split for Canada, where I can't sue her. Turns out there were some politics involved about how profit is evil, etc, if I got the story right.

Now look. Outfits like The Well (I recommend it for USENET), Portal, and whatnot charge hourly for UNIX and USENET access. No one has a problem with them doing this. But when I did this on GEnie, which also charges hourly, the resulting 300 notes or so were the sort of thing that was probably chanted during the beheadings of the French Revolution. What is the difference between GEnie and The Well? I don't get it.

And that's why USENET and GEnie don't exchange notes via a Gadgets link, now. It would help the Atari community to exchange information. Mind you, the USENET notes are spread to the four winds, globally; a satellite even beams them for free into the USA if you have a receiver! But the concept that someone was "profiteering" from the *free* notes was, apparently, the ultimate horror.

Someone did tell me (this is only hearsay) that people in the USENET "Community" were touchy since CompuServe had re-posted notes (and been shut down).

It sure redefined "community" for me. I've frankly lost any illusions about the goodwill of people on-line since this little episode. (And if you think I want to hear about it again, you're wrong. It is painful to try to do people a favor, improve things, and get hung for it.)

Just Another Old-Fashioned Lynch Mob

Well, last month, one of the most positive members of the Atari Community was lynched online on GEnie. He's a guy who started from scratch, set up a store and mail-order business, gave fantastic support and worked hard hours, and has helped thousands of Atari owners who don't have anywhere to turn. He is usually the standard other dealers are compared to, especially mail order. His name is Dave Troy; he runs Toad Computers. I'm personally proud I write for the same magazine he does.

The eruption focused a bit around Dave's rather well-done (in my opinion) 8-page ad in *Current Notes* last time. More, it focused a lot about Dave and a pal of his starting up a distributorship, mainly because they were already buying in distributor quantities so why not call it the right name? In a touch of Atari loyalty going way back, Dave named it "Eastern Front," which you will recall was a fantastic Atari 8-bit wargame from Chris Crawford, and also alludes to Dave's location, literally a walk over to the Atlantic Ocean. Absolutely everything above board.

Dave was accused of undermining Atari dealers by offering fantastic *low* prices in his ad. The lynchers said that Dave was hurting the Atari community by trying to drive Atari dealers out of business with low prices (horrors! competition!), and that a cabal was being setup to boycott Dave among developers (which I think is called "restraint of trade," but I am not sure of these things). Dave was accused of doing all this in secret, only being found out by the address being the same (huh?), and in general accused of being a greedy profiteer.

When I read this, my mouth fell open. Yup, the ultimate Orwell had happened: Atari people complaining about prices *too low.*

I know Dave Troy and am proud to know him. Jennifer Rucker, now Jennifer Troy, and Dave are both fine, fine people. I know how good Toad Computers is, and I know how hard it is to offer prices and services at that level. I wish Gadgets by Small was that good!

I *know* there was not a malicious bone in Dave's body when he did that ad, and he sure wasn't trying some cut-throat "destructive" deal. In fact, I'll say David Troy has probably done more for the USA Atari "community" than any other single individual in this country, including anyone at Atari. I'm sure that anyone will agree that that is at least worthy of a healthy debate.

Of course, some "communities" repay good service, great prices, and good people by getting out the rope and torches. Look in your history books.

I am ashamed of the people who are supporting the effort to damage Dave Troy and his startup for their *low* prices. Did you know that Atari developers get calls, asking them to boycott Toad Computers? Fact.

Did you know there is an organized effort to boycott *Current Notes,* for daring to run Dave's ad? Fact. I kid you not. (What's a little First Amendment, anyway?)

I cannot attribute shining motives to all this fooraw, either, because I *know* the people doing it are doing so because of their personal profit margins, not abstract morals about the "community" they are howling about in berserk fashion.

I was most interested to see the *originating* note came from *another Atari "dealer"* (I am personally unsure of that status), who was most annoyed that Toad Computers could beat his prices. He exposed Dave Troy's evil plot in a GEnie note for the community.

"However, I'm sure that his concern was fully not for himself and his profits, but for the Atari 'community'..." oh, heck, sorry, I can't hold a straight face any longer. Sure, pal.

A discussion best described as on LSD followed. It makes me feel ill to quote it, so I won't.

Another note talked about how hopeless it was with Atari anyway and who did this Dave Troy think he was, it was hopeless, he should not even try.

... yet Toad Computers continues to live and prosper and grow! ...

Some people need a reality check; others need to have "Hypocrite!" shouted at them. It's all sorta Biblical to me.

What Dave Troy deserves, and will never get, is an apology from the people who did this. I am personally hoping he isn't so disgusted with the relatively few who pulled this one that he gets out of the Atari community; he is one of our finest assets. I believe that if he wanted the money, he would start up a PC outfit such as Gateway Computers and become a millionaire by the time he is 30. He and Jennifer are fully capable of it.

He does it because he likes Atari computers, folks, from way back in the 8-bit days.

Have you noticed how much incredibly good information he has passed on in his *Current Notes* columns? Check out this month and the discussion on high resolution video. His modem article explained to me, for the first time, what a lot of the buzzwords *meant*, and, if I had a PostScript Font question, I sure know whom I would call. Is this a person putting together a secret distributorship to secretly undermine the Atari "community"? Yep, Dave sure keeps secrets like that.

I also trust Dave with a great deal more than I will talk about here, and I have reason in my life not to trust people that closely again (longtime readers understand this). Dave and Jennifer broke through that wall inside of me with their total class act. I often recommend them to people who call Gadgets.

Conclusion

Probably it's just the movies. But people think that idiot secret conspiracies really work. (Especially certain people who are trying for boycotts.) They also generally think that a good secret conspiracy will overcome good advertising, good prices, good support, and a friendly voice on the phone *every time.*

The Moody Blues has a song for them, about the land of make believe.

Me? Am I going to personally do anything about this? Well, as soon as Dave and I get our Trilateral Commission seats, and Clinton confirms us, we'll go ahead and combine operations into a covert attempt to unseat the government of Bolivia, doubtlessly using a White House memo system with permanent backup to record our memos back and forth. After all, I know a lot about TOW missiles, and the Troys just know marketing up and down. We figure with Elvis' new recordings he's making there, we'll just clean up, and with our controlling interest in Time-Warner, you won't read about it. Nor believe it if you did.

You see, being from Antarus IV, as an alien being, I have a different perspective on you humanoids. As *The Star* noted recently, owners of computer equipment who work weird hours tend to be aliens (no kidding, they *said* that), so I might as well go with the flow.

Antarus IV is, of course, the most profiteering planet around, and we live to suck the life from the Atari "community."

We control the vertical. We control the horizontal. And Dave Troy is out to destroy the Atari community.

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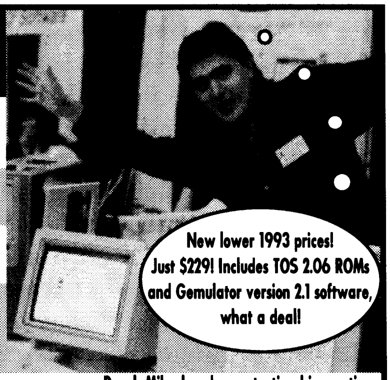

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Halftone and Color Scanning

Running Out of Ram *by David Barkin*

As readers of my column know (thank God for Mom and Dad) I'm not exactly an Atari Basher. This is not due to my retiring nature or the bribes that I am constantly soliciting, with, I might add, very meager results. I face the facts: This is one heck of a small platform and, in this country, a shrinking one. This is, to say the least, a blow to the idea of "Capitalism," in which the give and take of competitive private enterprise weeds out the inferior and promotes the superior. I don't know whether you agree with my opinion that the ST is a better platform than the Macintosh. But you would have to be completely ignorant of hardware and software not to know that, availability of software aside, the Intel/DOS (IBM and compatibles) combination is not in the same league as either the Mac or Atari.

I'll take this one step further. I will state that for Desk-top Publishing, the ST/TT (is the Falcon FT?) are as good a personal computer platform as *any* on the market. While there isn't as much software (comparatively) to choose from, what there is, is often superior to the stuff available for the Mac. The ST makes better use of memory and is more efficient to program to (more on this subject in future articles). Up until recently, however, there were two glaring weaknesses in this best of all possible platforms that made the preceding statement untrue.

First: There was no way to export DTP (Desk-Top Publishing) files to the Postscript industry standard for final output. This is no longer the case since *Pagestream by Softlogic* and *Didot Professional by ComputerBild* are both capable of full Postscript compatibility and, hopefully, my favorite program *Calamus SL by DMC* will soon be Postscript capable.

Second: There was no true halftone and color scanning capability, which is to say, no way to directly load true photographs into my computer for further manipulation. This, too, is no longer the case and this new scanning capability represents a very exciting development. The purpose of this article, and several future articles, is to explain precisely what all this means for Atari owners.

This first article in the series will explain the difference between *dithered scanning* and true *halftone scanning* and, as they say, tell you where you can get yours.

The Limitations of Dithered Scanners

Years ago I went out and hocked my then existing dog for a Navarone Scanner, flatbed no less. Along with my scanner I had *Touch-Up* software by *Migraph.* I'm still a big fan of *Touch-Up* but my Navarone scanner has severe limitations that made its use as a vehicle for professional DTP work "for position only."

This is what you mark on your page when you send a document, which contains photographs, to the printer. I would include a Navarone-scanned image that was cropped and positioned in such a way that the printer would be able to take the enclosed *real photograph* and know how to position it. Aside from the fact that this represented a cumbersome and expensive process, it also limited my ability to claim "full service capability."

Just what is wrong with the Navarone? It has 300 dpi (dots per inch) capability. This, I thought, was its main problem. It also claimed 32 gray levels. I figured that this was problem two, but not as significant as problem one. All these conclusions, on my part, simply revealed my ignorance of the subject.

The real weakness with the *concept* behind the Navarone was the *dithered grayscale as opposed to true gray scale!* What does this mean? In scanning you will hear the term "bit," 2-bit, 8-bit, 24-bit, etc. These expressions refer to the ability of the scanner to assign levels of color to each pixel. The problem with the Navarone was that it was actually a 1-bit scanner, which means that each pixel was assigned a level of color of black or white. The "dithered" gray scale routine comes from the software arranging these black and white dots into *patterns which simulate gray.* I am slow. I am slow. It took me *years* to figure this out. (Hey, I'm a boiler mechanic. What do I know?) At 300 dpi there is a limit to how many ways you can arrange these dots to simulate gray. The same is true for printing the results of these scans.

Halftone and Color Scanning

Let's take a 300 dpi 8-bit scan (2 to the eighth power or 256 levels of gray). Each one of these dots is assigned one of 256 different gray values, not dithered gray values but *true values of color. Your monitor or your printer may not be able to show or print these* ***values but they are there available for manipulation.***

Big deal you say? Take a look at figures 1 and 2. Both of these figures are photographs of a local backyard building project of mine, called Croton Dam, which I've been working on in my spare time. They were both scanned at 150 dpi. Figure 1 is your normal image file. As the picture is expanded, what seems to be happening? Since the image was originally just a group of black and white dots, blow them up and presto, a computer picture, same picture, just bigger dots.

But figure 2, this was an 8-bit .TIF (tagged image format) file where each pixel represents a *level of gray.* As the picture is blown up, you *can start to see the result of these levels of gray. The picture is getting better!*

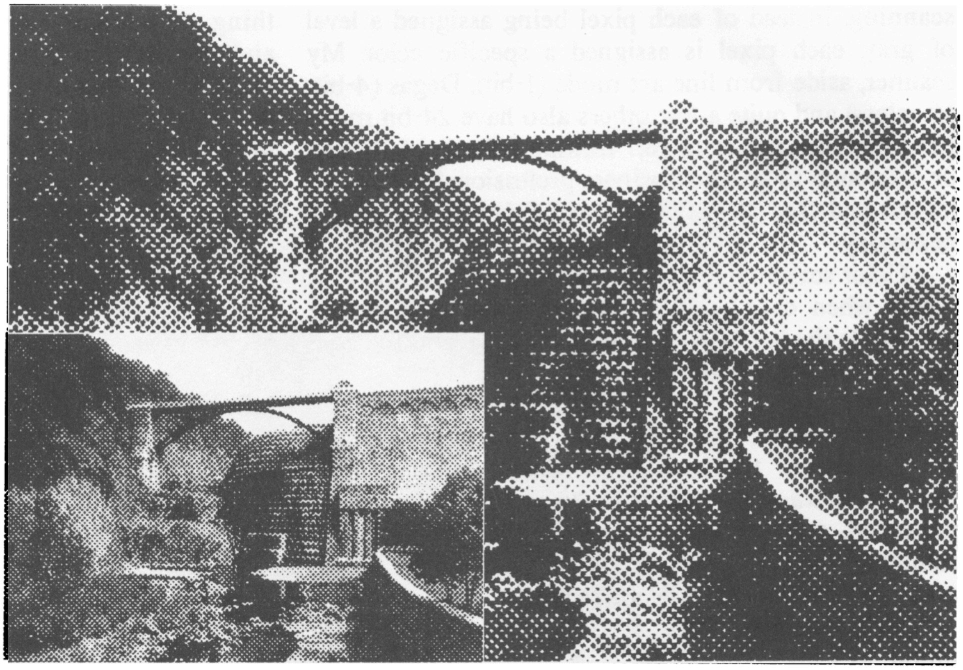

Figure 1. The smaller picture, tucked away in the bottom left corner, is a 3 by 5 photo scanned at 150 DPI. After optimization the final printing is at one half size. The larger image is the same file expanded to twice its size. Notice that we are now making a "computer" picture.

This is because 150 dpi is actually a fairly fine resolution. What's happening is that the entire picture is divided up, not into arbitrarily black or white dots, but rather into areas of gray. If a line of rocks is 150th of an inch and light gray in color, my laser printer (no matter how intelligent) can not even begin to accurately print it out.

With the Navarone and similar dithered gray scale scanners, this detail and details quite a bit larger, are simply ignored or lost; they just don't exist to the hardware. *But* if the scan is done as a true gray scale scan, each one of these 150 dpi pixels represents an actual area of gray and, when the picture is enlarged, even my lowly laser printer, even an inexpensive 9-pin dot matrix printer, can ***print them!***

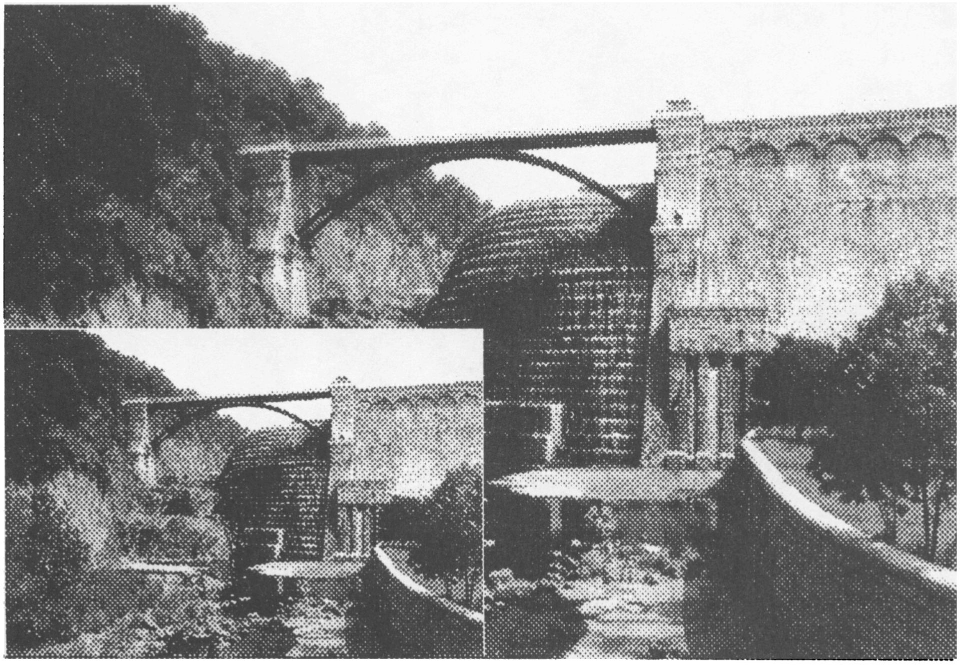

Figure 2. Here we have the exact same scan, done at 150 dpi, but this time it's a halftone .TIF file. Look at the difference when we enlarge this image. The hidden facets of the photo start to be revealed. The image is getting better!

A Darkroom on Your Desk

Let me say that if I went to a service bureau with a computer file of this picture I could turn it back into a photograph. With the right software I can manipulate this picture as one would manipulate a true photograph *but easier, with more precision.* In short, my computer is now a dark room that a straight photographer would sell his or her children for AND IT'S MINE! ALL MINE! Excuse me while I take something that the nice doctors told me would make me stop shooting and shouting at the neighbors.

Color scanning is simply an extension of gray scale scanning. Instead of each pixel being assigned a level of gray, each pixel is assigned a specific color. My scanner, aside from line art mode (1-bit), Degas (4-bit, 16 colors) and quite a few others also have 24-bit mode (2 to the 24th power or 16.7 million colors). 24-bit color is enough to go into business professionally. You can go out and find 30-bit color, be my guest, but it's not necessary.

Color scanning is also available for the ST. Well, as I said when opening this article, this true scanning represents the last barrier between the ST and the conquest of the known world.

Redefining Moire Patterns

Remember the expression Moire patterns? (pronounced mwä ra´). That meant that if a picture was expanded, reduced, or distorted in less than an *even* multiple, you would get "banding" and/or a "checkered" pattern all over your image.

Well, moire no longer means that at all. That definition, as I understood it, was in reference to dithered images. Take a look at figure 4. Now that's irregular but, voila, no moire. This is because these are areas of gray not dots that we are manipulating. No more moire with *photographs.*

Moire patterns still occur, however, when we scan an image which has itself been *printed* and is composed, therefore, of little dots. The scanner can get confused as to what its scanning since it is no longer scanning areas of color but rather dots that make up color and thus the creation of moire patterns. The only way to deal with this is to deliberately put something transparent between the image to be scanned and the scanner in order to move the image just a touch out of focus, thus blurring the dots enough to allow a good scan. You can turn the image a hair and hope that changes the alignment to match your scanner or have really good software that will deal with the problem later on after it's been loaded into your computer.

Choosing and Buying Your Scanner

As to acquiring your own scanner, pay close attention because all this is new to the ST world and hopefully you can avoid some of the pitfalls which caused me to pull all the fur off the dog, at the expense of large losses of body parts as the dog defended himself. At the moment our options are basically limited to just two models of color scanners. The Epson ES 300C and the Microtek 600Z. Everything I've read about scanners lists the Microtek as the best or one of the best color scanners around. The Epson comes in somewhere in the middle of the pack.

Naturally, I own the Epson, and I'm pleased as punch. The Epson is available from any good computer store but then you need the software driver and a hardware interface. These can be gotten through Goldleaf Publishing, or San Jose Computer. Unfortunately, only San Jose Computer will sell the software separately. Goldleaf, at one time did not; then they did; but what their policy is at the moment I don't know. D & P Computer also distributes the Goldleaf package. There may very well be others. San Jose will sell you the scanner driver software separately.

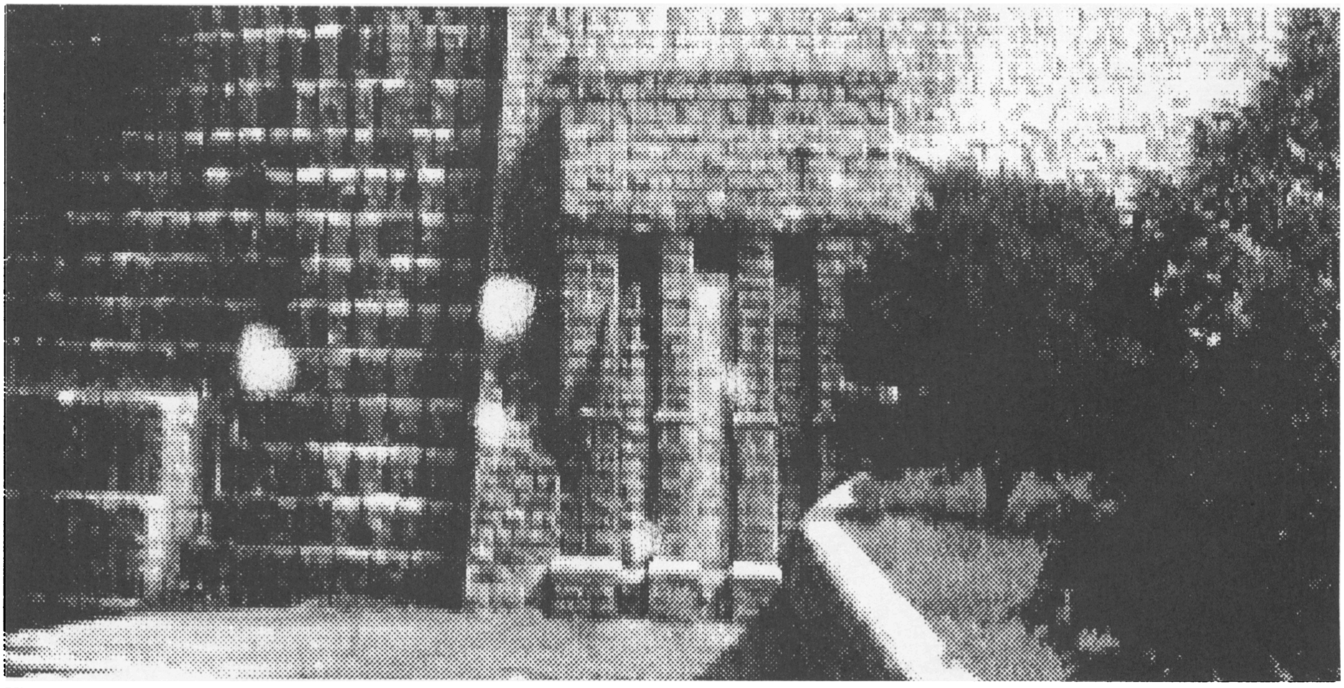

Figure 3. Look familiar? This is a detail of the original 150 dpi scan blown up seven and a third times (not seven times, seven and a third times). If it looks blurry, the original photo looked blurry. Besides I could have scanned this at 300 dpi. Considering the reproductive hardware used by CN, this would be overkill.

If you own a TT, this is no problem as the SCSI interface, also sold separately by Epson, will allow you to plug the scanner right in and away you go. If you own an ST, you will need an interface. Check with ICD, the manufacturer of some wonderful hardware, to determine if their new SCSI interface will work with the Epson scanner. I see no reason why this should not work with an ST. I tried to check with both Epson and ICD and they *think* there should be no problem.

Another problem with the Epson is that the software driver is available in two different forms. The one distributed by Goldleaf is called *The Look* and there are, apparently, no problems with the created .TIF files. The other driver, which has no fancy name, may give some programs problems. The .TIF files are optimized for *Retouche* the professional image processing software. The first release of *Calamus SL* would not load the color .TIF files. The latest update to *SL* has no problem with these files except for an ominous warning message. I have no idea how these files would load into *Pagestream.*

One big word of caution for TT owners; the SCSI driver software distributed by Atari ***will not drive the Epson scanner.*** You must get the ICD hard drive software for your computer to recognize the scanner. ICD has placed their software in the Public domain (yes, patronize the people who make your life better) so acquiring their software should be no problem. As I said before, if you own an ST and want to be able to use SCSI peripherals, find out if ICD's interface will work with the scanner. I'm pretty sure it will, but, hey, it's not my machine—better check.

The software driver for the Microtek scanner, which they will sell separately, is available from DMC, my favorite DTP people. Certainly if they are competitive on the price of the scanner and you want a Microtek, it would probably pay to get the whole package from them. Everything I've read about scanners lists the Microtek at or near the top, but unfortunately, I've never used it. The model being sold by DMC has won nothing but praise from everyone I've talked to. They tell me that they are selling the Microtek 600ZS. The S stands for SCSI. In other words, this scanner is being sold for the TT. DMC reports no problems with their scanner and the TT SCSI port. Once again an ST should work with the ICD SCSI adapter, but check with ICD for further implications.

As a matter of personal preference I would just like to say that none of these companies actually manufacture the scanner itself. The ST market is small. I have no objection to a company making a profit on the driver and interface. After all, the development of these products cost a bundle and how many people are going to buy them? Why shouldn't they make a buck? On the other hand, I would not buy a scanner from a company that would not sell the interface and software separately. This is just my personal opinion.

Resolution? Software or Hardware?

The primary difference between these scanners is that the Microtek has true 600 x 300 resolution while the Epson is only 300 dpi. Both of these scanner manufacturers use software interpolation to claim 600 dpi resolution. This software works as follows: When a picture is scanned at 600 dpi the actual scanning is done at a resolution of 300 x 300 for the Epson and 600 x 300 for the Microtek. The scanner then divides the 300 dpi into two and sends 600 dpi of information to the computer. But the *actual* resolution is still the lower number. You get a finer appearance but the actual image data is the same.

The Microtek has a higher true resolution which actually approximates 450 dpi. All this is not as important as it sounds, because these are not dithered pictures but true color or halftone images.

These are big files! A 3 x 5 photo at 300 dpi scanned in halftone (8-bit) mode is 1.5 megs in size. A color version (24-bit) is 4.5 megs. Can you really handle 600 dpi?

I've made photographs, 13 x 19 inches, from 180 dpi scans that would knock your socks off—you who think only of dithered images. Take a look at figure 3. This is *still from the original scan of figures 1 and 2.* Croton Dam is looking better and better and this was *scanned at 150 dpi.*

I don't know about the Microtek, but the Epson can use software interpolation to go as high as 1200 dpi. In fact, the company La Cie, which makes its own scanner for the Mac, advertises 1200 dpi resolution. However, the La Cie scanner is actually the Epson; the claimed resolution is a software interpolation. Let the buyer beware. One last warning; don't even think about getting one of these scanners without a hard drive.

In our next article we will examine just what kind of software is out there to take advantage of these scanned images. And this is exciting stuff.

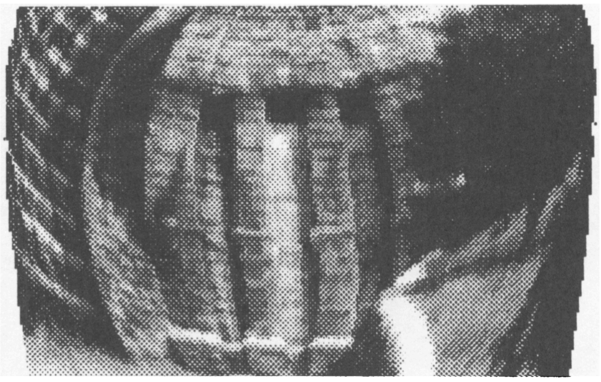

Figure 4. Another detail from the original scan. This one is heavily distorted to demonstrate the author's motto: "Real computer nerds don't moire."

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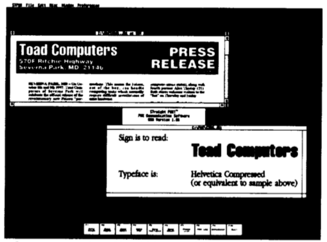
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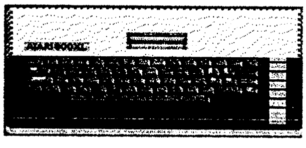

Electronic Mail:

GEnie to Internet to CompuServe to WWIVnet ... and Back

by Richard L. Reaser Jr.

Going Through the Stacks

I'm back in Los Angeles for the holidays, putting this column and accompanying articles together. Like everyone else, I'm recovering from the festivities and preparing to start 1993. It'll be a six month stretch in Alabama, before I get back to my family. Our twins are really getting big and will be crawling when I see them next in person.

I have been attempting to complete my *ANALOG* and *Antic* collections the past few years and have about two issues to find for each. As I was restacking my magazines before the trip to California. I noticed that my *Current Notes* stack is now higher than the *ANALOG* or *Antic* stack. Wow! I've made a New Year's resolution to go back through all my old magazines and dredge out any items of interest for you. I'm going to try to read one issue of each magazine, each week.

Elsewhere in This Issue

In previous columns, I've mentioned that Bobby Clark has been working on an off-line messaging system for our 8-bits. Well, he joins us this month with a run down on his program, *.QWKsilver.* Bobby is a regular on the Atari 8-bit FidoNet echo. He started out in 1984 with a 600XL and has become quite a computer hobbyist and programmer. Bobby is also attempting to set up an 8-bit echo on WWIVnet, called ATARDIS. Those of you on WWIV boards watch for it. More on WWIV, later.

Consistent with our efforts at *CN* to bring you helpful hints to get the most from your computer, Tom Andrews joins us for the first time with a list of handy tips and programs for 8-bit Atarians. Tom is a farmer. (Yes, farmer.) He bought his first Atari, an 800, at a garage sale in 1985. He still has it, and it works just great. Tom is quite an accomplished 8-bitter. He is currently the 8-bit Editor for the ACE of Syracuse Newsletter. He is also a lifetime honorary member of the Ol' Hackers Atari User Group, the first ever to receive this honor. (He's the programmer who added the multi-column printing ability to their newsletter software.) Tom had a program published in the August 1989 issue of *Antic*, Customer List Manager. He also appeared in the Premier issue of *Atari Classics*, and should be in the second issue, as well.

CN veteran Ed Hall rejoins us this month from the "Great White North." Ed hails from Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories of Canada. I get cold just thinking about it. Ed provides us with three short pieces on *New Atari User Magazine*, new Polish software and new British Software. Ed is also a regular columnist for *Atari Classics.*

Movie Update

John Hardie sent me a short note on GEnie, pointing out that an Atari 5200, not a 2600 played the central role in Cloak & Dagger (which was filmed principally in San Antonio, TX.) It's nice to know that you guys actually read all this stuff.

Other Atari movie trivia that people have mentioned to me include the large Atari Fuji in the movie "Blade Runner" and the use of an Atari Portfolio in the movie "Terminator II."

FidoNet

FidoNet continues to grow. Table 1 provides an update to the Atari 8-bit echo nodelist. Larry Black and I hope to rebaseline the entire list shortly. Let me know if you are looking for your closest FidoNet BBS.

E-mail Between GEnie and CompuServe

CompuServe (CIS) and GEnie members now have the ability to send and receive messages to each other through the Internet. I've mentioned in previous columns that GEnie offers an Internet subscription service to its members, through which they can send and

Table 1. New FidoNet BBSs

Zone:Net/Node	BBS Name	City, State	SysOp Name	Phone Number	Comments
1:203/726	Vortex	Sacramento CA	Pam Lunsford	1-916-332-7141	9600
1:208/405	Hornets Nest	Manteca CA	Ken Schatzle	1-209-239-5133	9600
1:271/270	VA Data Exchange	Newport News VA	Tim Jacobs	1-804-877-3562	9600
1:2240/175	The Association MAC BBS	Grand Blanc MI	Glen Stewart	1-313-695-6744	9600
1:3619/25	Ground Zero	New Port Richey FL	Dave Anderson	1-813-849-4034	9600
1:3608/16	Nightmare Cafe	Callaway FL	Brian Hendricks	1-904-874-2296	9600

receive Internet messages. I've discussed CIS's Internet capabilities as well. The Internet can now be the gateway for messages between the two information services.

At this time the GEnie member must be a subscriber to GEnie's Internet service to send or receive messages from CIS. If they do not subscribe, any messages sent to them via Internet will be returned as user unknown.

To send Internet messages from CompuServe Mail to a GEnie Internet subscriber, the address would be entered as

user@genie.geis.com.

For example, my GEnie user id is "r.reaserjr1" and my address for a CompuServe user would be entered as:

r.reaserjr1@genie.geis.com

To send Internet messages from GEnie to an Internet address/CompuServe, the GEnie Internet subscriber has two options:

1) To send messages from standard GEnie Mail, enter the CIS Internet address in the "TO:" field. When sending from GEnie Mail, the Internet address must be appended with "@inet#." For example, my CIS id is 72130,2073 and I would be addressed as:

TO: 72130.2073@compuserve.com@inet#

2) To send messages from the GEnie Internet Mail Service (selection 5 on Page 207), enter the CIS Internet address (user.id·compuserve.com) when prompted for the destination internet address by the GE system. For example:

Dest. Internet Address: 72130.2073@compuserve.com.

DO NOT type "@inet#" after the address when sending Internet mail from page 207 or mail will be returned!

Over the past two months I've run several tests on this capability. It is normally very fast. It takes about a minute for a message to appear on the other service, once sent. Wow!! I did find a couple of bugs on the CompuServe side that have since been fixed, once I reported them. For a while, the auto-addressing reply function on CIS didn't want to work with addresses that ended in a digit (like mine).

GEnie News

American Techna-Vision, a leading source of 8-bit products and supplies, is now online with GEnie. Check category 12, topic 6 in the bulletin board.

When in the message bases on GEnie, you can now use the command "BYE" and log off without having to "EXIt" or option 17 first.

The Atari 8-bit message bases are undergoing major reconstruction on GEnie. Bravo, Craig S. Thom! Archives of previous message threads are now available in the Library for quick downloading.

As promised last month, I've checked out the connectivity between GEnie and the Atari Archives at the University of Michigan. It works as advertised. I posted the file listing for the Atari Archive in the Library (File ♯6103, ATARIRKV.ARC). To request a file, send a message to UNIXSYSOP$ or FTP$ requesting the file by the proper name from:

atari.archive.umich.edu.

I've also checked the feasibility of individuals getting direct distribution of comp.sys.atari.8bit messages and the Info-Atari8 Digest on GEnie. It's possible, but could get expensive for an individual. Comp.sys.atari.8bit will feed a ton of messages into your GEnie mailbox at 30 cents a pop; it could be up to $15 a day! Info–Atari8 Digest would be cheaper, but not much since it is an extremely long, daily file.

Here's my plan. I asked GEnie Atari 8-bit Sysops to put themselves on distribution for the Info–Atari8 Digest so that they can put it in the library for all to download. They have free accounts. I think this is reasonable and not too much hassle. Presently, no one is posting the Digests to GEnie and they are now only available on CompuServe. I would like to make this a "grass roots" campaign. Please express your views to DARLAH or AT$ on GEnie. Darlah Potechin is the master Atari SysOp on GEnie and hasn't gotten back with me on this point (among other things). Let her know how you feel!!

CIS Tips

I still have a lot to learn about CIS (and GEnie for that matter). Fortunately, the SysOps on CIS are ever so helpful. Don LeBow provided me with the following two tricks that solved some problems that I'm sure the rest of you have experienced as well.

GEnie has a clean way to see what new files have been uploaded since you last checked. You just pick option 11 from the Library menu. CIS doesn't have an "option 11." Here's the work around. The easiest way to check for new files in all the libraries at once is to use the LIB:ALL command once you're in the Atari8 forum. For example,

BRO LIB:ALL

will show you all new files in all libs in descending order. That is newest files first, then oldest ones. Just abort the BROwse when you get to the point where you've already seen an entry.

If you know exactly how many days it's been since you last checked, you can enter the command:

BRO LIB:ALL AGE:3

(which would show all files uploaded in the past 3 days.)

The CompuServe Atari8 forum also includes Lynx owners, who have their own message base. I don't have a Lynx, so I am not particularly interested in reading Lynx messages. Don provided me this helpful hint. To read all messages *EXCEPT* the Lynx ones, select OPTions from the main forum menu or Forum! prompt and then pick SECtions. To de-select the Lynx messages, type 16 (all sections are selected/de-selected like this). Or you can use the command MES;SEL and that allows you to select all message threads by section. Just pick all the sections except the Lynx section. You can enter the numbers all at once like "1–15,17".

As space permits, I plan to pass more of these little tips to you so that you can get more from your on line information services.

New CompuServe Features

CompuServe Mail has added a new feature that will automatically append a distribution list to each message you send, displaying each recipient of a message.

If you would prefer not to disclose the recipients, you can change the SHOW recipients option by choosing option 6, SET options, from the CompuServe Mail Main Menu. Then choose option 6, SHOW recipients, to toggle (i.e. turn on or off) the setting.

Other people (with CompuServe front-end programs, like we don't have) can send Atari 8-bitters messages with priority notices and expiration dates. Messages will display an expiration date if the message was sent with an expiration date or the message is SAVEd after reading.

ASCII messages are stored in your mailbox for up to 90 days after they have been read. Binary messages are stored for up to 30 days after they have been saved. In the past, the expiration date of a message has not been visible to the reader. You can now make the expiration date appear, as explained above, by choosing to SAVE the message after reading it. The next time you access mail, the message will show an expiration date. In order to save the message for another 90 days, you must choose to go in and SAVE the message again.

Another new feature on CIS lets you know how much an Internet message costs when sent. Now there is less mystery about how these charges work. When sending an message from CIS to the Internet, it is no longer necessary to preface the word "INTERNET:" with a "›".

Best Electronics Clock

Those of you who read the Best Electronics ad in the premier issue of *Atari Classics* no doubt noticed the words about their efforts to produce an R-TIME 8 clone. I called Brad Koda at Best and got the following additional information. The clone will use a standard Dallas Semiconductor Clock Module (same as used for STs). It will be 100% Sparta compatible and will use disk-based software. Two versions are envisioned. One will plug into the Operating System chip slot. The other version will be a non-pass through cartridge. It is being programmed in the UK. The programmer has been diverted to other projects, so the debut of the product has been delayed. Brad will be traveling to the British Isles to check on things in February.

Sending E-mail Between the Internet and WWIVnet

Many Atari 8-bitters frequent WWIV BBSs. WWIV is a popular BBS program (culture?) not unlike ForeM or OPUS. WWIV also supports networking and there is a large network of WWIV BBSs. The following information was adapted from a text file written by Bitbanger, 1@500 WWIVnet, and describes how to "internetwork" with WWIV.

WWIVnet addresses are of the form:
‹usernumber›@‹nodenumber›.
To send mail from the Internet to someone on WWIVnet, use an address in either of these two forms:
wwiv!‹usernumber›–‹nodenumber›@tfsquad.mn.org
On most Internet systems, the following address will work better:
‹usernumber›–‹nodenumber›@wwiv.tfsquad.mn.org

For instance, to send mail to Bitbanger's WWIVnet account on Someplace Else BBS, 23@9702, you'd send mail to:
wwiv!23–9702@tfsquad.mn.org
or
23–9702@wwiv.tfsquad.mn.org.

You can also send mail to people on WWIVnet by name. However, since WWIVnet usernames can be several words you must replace any spaces in the user name with an underscore character, because Internet mail doesn't allow multiword usernames. Case is not important as well. Thus, to send mail to King of Hearts on node 9999, you'd send to:
king_of_hearts–9999@wwiv.tfsquad.mn.org
or
wwiv!king_of_hearts–9999@tfsquad.mn.org

Internet users are automatically assigned WWIV user numbers when their posts are gatewayed. This allows the normal WWIV "autoreply" feature to work properly.

Here's how to send messages to the Internet from WWIVnet. If the Internet address is:
user@site,
a WWIV user can send e-mail to:
‹user›#‹site›@‹nodenum›
where nodenum is the node number of a gateway. (More on this later.) You simply substitute a # for the @ in the Internet address. For example, a WWIVnet user could send mail to:
r.reaserjr1@genie.geis.com
by sending to
r.reaserjr1#genie.geis.com@506.
Sending mail to poehland%phvax.dnet@smithkline.com would be done by sending to:
poehland%phvax.dnet#smithkline.com@506.

Sending to an Internet address beginning with a number (in particular, Compuserve addresses, such as 72130.2130@compuserve.com) from WWIVnet will not work properly, because WWIV assumes the first part of the address is a WWIV usernumber. To send to an Internet address beginning with a number from WWIVnet, you must begin the address with a quotationmark (e.g., "72130.2130#compuserve.com@501). The address must begin with a quotation mark, but a trailing quote is optional.

Internet mail is VERY powerful and can easily be abused; therefore, system administrators of gateway sites reserve the right to stop mail from moving through the gates that is termed excessive. System administrators also reserve the right to deny gateway access to abusers of any of the gateways. BE REASONABLE!

There are currently two gateways between the Internet and WWIVnet:

WWIVnet @501 (coldbox.cojones.com)

and

WWIVnet@506 (tfsquad.mn.org).

The above examples all used the second gateway. To pass mail from Internet to WWIV, the proper addressing form is

user-site@wwiv.cojones.com
(wwiv!user-site@cojones.com)

or

user-site@wwiv.tfsquad.mn.org
(wwiv!user-site@tfsquad.mn.org)

respectively.

You can request the latest information on this topic from faq-request @506 (WWIVnet) or faq-request@tfsquad.mn.org (Internet).

B&C ComputerVisions New Catalog

B&C's new, 30 page, Winter 1992 catalog is out! It's fantastic!! Inside the front cover are a bunch of those new European titles. (Ed Hall reviews some of them elsewhere in this issue.) B&C also has those hard-to-find APX Classics on sale in the catalog for $4.00. This is another "must have" catalog. To get your copy, send $1.50 or order something (to get one free) from: B&C ComputerVisions, 2730 Scott Blvd, Santa Clara, CA 95050. Phone: (408) 986-9960.

B&C is also trying to clear out their stock of cassettes. They have a limited number of Atari Corporation programs, in their original boxes: *Italian*, *French*, *Speed Reading*, *Juggles Rainbow* and *Introduction to Programming I & II*. B&C also have a large number of cartridges for sale for $9.95. (I bought *Star Raiders II*.) Call for availability.

Maze of AGDADON Now in Beta Test!

Jeff Potter has released a one-player demo version of this 8-bit MidiMaze Clone. He's tested it with three players and it works fine. Watch for it on GEnie and CIS. Jeff plans to release this as a shareware disk once the bugs are killed.

That's all for this month. Be sure to write or E-mail your requests, questions or complaints to me as shown by the table of contents near the front of the magazine.

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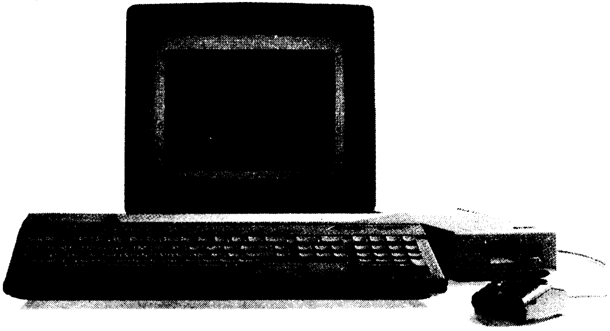

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The Polish Connection

New Software for Your Old Computer

by Ed Hall

Life is full of ironies--especially if you own an Atari. Here we are, fighting a desperate rear-guard action, trying to keep our 8-bit machines alive. It would be natural to expect that new programs, when they do make an appearance, would be only pale shadows of those from the glory years. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It just so happens that programmers at this very moment are producing some of the finest programs ever seen on our machines. They are pushing the 8-bit envelope to the max, creating programs that astonish and delight, programs that shame all but the best from the last 10 years.

And who is responsible for all this hot coding? Irony of ironies, it is not happening in Atari's homeland, but on distant shores, and not just in places you might expect, such as England and Germany, but in such unlikely spots as Holland, Scotland, and yes, Poland.

According to a news release issued by an American distributor named Trans World Exchange (TWE), half of the computers in use in Poland are Atari 8-bits. If true, it would go a long way toward explaining the remarkable surge of Poles to the forefront of 8-bit programmers. For example, you should have heard by now of two new games from Poland called *Fred* and *Mission Shark.* If not, here's a quick two-word review: buy them. If you hate games, buy them anyway-the soundtracks are so good you can always dance to them.

TWE is a joint Polish/American venture to showcase the skills of Polish programmers. The programs they are offering are shareware. And the amount they are asking, well, let me tell you, I'm almost embarrassed to repeat it. How many times have you received a shareware product that is substandard, yet accompanied by a demand for money so rude that it verges on insulting?

Not so in this case. TWE is asking $3.00 for their programs, with a special user's group rate of $2.00 per game for orders of 5 or more. A sum so paltry it makes you want to weep.

Gabi & Kvadryk

Both are strategy games along the lines favored by Ke-Soft. *Gabi* is a squirrel who has to gather nuts for the winter. This involves maneuvering them around the screen in order to find the right spot to crack them open. Sounds silly, I know, but very quickly the task will have you ripping out your hair by the roots.

In *Kvadryk,* you have to capture a dragon. You accomplish this by moving bricks around so the dragon goes where you want it to. Since the dragon is constantly on the move, the task is tough. Rather like playing a game of chess with someone who keeps on making moves, regardless of whether or not you have moved.

Though neither game is as brilliant as *Fred* or *Mission Shark,* they are immediately recognizable as polished and professional products. Both have well-done title screens, online instructions in English, and (what is for me one of the distinguishing features of Polish programming) extremely imaginative fonts. [Editor's Note: See CN Oct '92 for Roger Meston's review of *Fred.* Roger also has a *Mission Shark* review in the works. —RR]

The sole deficiency in both programs is the music. *Kvadryk* has none, and *Gabi* has an unremarkable tune on the title screen. This is unusual because European software often includes musical compositions of extraordinary quality.

3-Program Disk

Also available is a disk containing 3 Turbo-Basic programs. However, for a number of reasons, this is less of a bargain than *Gabi* and *Kvadryk.* First of all, everything is in Polish. When you pay your shareware fee, you receive English instructions; they're adequate, but rather sloppily put together. Also, the press release received by *Current Notes* indicated that the $3.00 fee for this disk was a special introductory offer; the regular price is $5.00.

Of the programs on the disk, I liked *Dzungla* the best. It's a two-player board game, with each side having a number of animal pieces to move about. The ranking of each piece determines who will be the winner in an engagement. The object is to overpower the opponent's camp.

Calendarium is the nicest-looking calendar program I've seen. Unfortunately, since everything is in Polish, it's not very easy to use, even with the English instructions at your side. To further confuse things, Monday is given as the first day of the week. The program also provides the phase of the moon, the zodiacal sign, and the patron saint for the day selected.

Master Mind is the least interesting program on the disk. It is basically a re-creation of the classic 1972 logic game by Invicta Plastics (UK). The computer, or another person, guesses what four colored markers someone has chosen. It is awkward to

(Continued on page 47.)

NEW ATARI USER

British Equivalent of Antic and Analog!

by Ed Hall

To my knowledge, the only regular source of brand new software for Atari 8-bits is the British magazine, *New Atari User.* Old hands will know that *New Atari User* is the former *Page 6* magazine. The change in name occurred in 1989 when *Page 6* absorbed another British magazine called *Atari User.* Don't confuse either of these with the American magazine *AtariUser* from Quill Publishing Co. [Editor's Note: *Atari Interface Magazine* offers an 8-bit disk-of-the-month, which consists principally of old (and some newer) public domain programs. *Atari Classics* also offers a bi-monthly 8-bit disk, which may feature some new software. —RR]

Readers who long for the good old days of *Antic* and *Analog* will feel right at home in the pages of *New Atari User.* It's got it all: articles, reviews, tutorials, type-in listings, even advertisements! The programs consist of the usual assortment of games, utilities, applications, educational programs, etc. Most are in Basic, but some are in TurboBASIC and assembly language.

One of the things I enjoy most about *New Atari User* is the perspective it gives me on the European scene. As you may know, Europe is a hotspot for 8-bit software, much of which is (a) superlative, and (b) unknown in North America. For example, in issue 58 (October/November 1992) there was a report on the big show in Dusseldorf where the Falcon was introduced. But for 8-bitters, the most important news was all the new software titles (32!) including a *Lemmings* clone. The author also discovered Atari 800XE machines being sold. That's right ... 800XE!!

One of the best things about *New Atari User* is the bonus program which appears on every issue disk. Over the years there have been some fine offerings. Let me mention a few:

Amnesia (Issue #49) - A concentration-type game featuring great music and hypnotically pulsating mechanisms.

The Amulet (Issue #50) - A text adventure that was formerly a commercial release.

Symbolism (Issue #51) - A strategy game that requires you to bounce a black ball over a grid of tiles. The graphics have an unusual sketchy quality and pleasing pastel colors.

Plop (Issue #52) - An innovative split-screen maze game. The object is to move a ball into a hole; both are movable. In the one-player mode, you can switch between screens.

Pipeline (Issue #54) - A great TurboBASIC game that requires you to connect sections of pipe on a number of screens. The graphics are well-done, and the interface works great.

Contagion (Issue #58) - A shoot-em-up on a grid. Superb graphics. This game was developed for Atari UK, but never released commercially.

New Atari User is a bi-monthly publication (and always has been, even back when it was *Page 6*). It boasts a full-color cover, coated stock, and lots of photos and graphics inside. Two-thirds of the magazine is devoted to 8-bit coverage,the remainder to ST's. *New Atari User* also sells commercial software, and has a continually expanding PD collection.

New Atari User and *Current Notes* now hold the distinction of being the two longest-running Atari magazines. If you're a die-hard 8-bitter, you can't afford to miss this excellent publication.

Magazine subscription rates (in pounds sterling) are 15 for surface mail and 21 for air mail. There is also a magazine plus disk subscription available for 32 (surface) or 42 (air mail). VISA and MasterCard are accepted. Write to New Atari User: Page 6 Publishing, P.O. Box 54, Stafford, ST16 1DR, England.

Make sure any correspondence addressed to the magazine goes by airmail, otherwise it could take a month or longer to get there.

■■■■■■■

The Polish Connection (Cont. from page 46)

play with two people, since one needs to look away. This game presents a great opportunity for implementation on two separate computers connected by modem or possibly the "gamelink."

This disk might be of most interest to those who wish to further their knowledge of TurboBASIC. Some of the program lines are pretty hairy-looking.

Disk Polish

If you want to buff up your software collection, get your hooks into some of these Polish programs. More are coming. *Gabi* or *Kvadryk* are $3 each; the *3-Program Disk* is $5. Contact: Trans World Exchange, P.O. Box 44251, Parkland, WA 98444.

Those in the Pacific Northwest, and familiar with PSAN (Puget Sound Atari News), may recognize the name Christopher (Kit) Carson, who is associated with TWE. All of the programs mentioned in this review were written by Roland Pantova under the Landsoft label. They are for XL/XE machines only.

■■■■■■■

Zeppelin Games

More New Software for Your Atari Classic

by Ed Hall

Recently, while glancing through a computer gaming magazine, I came across a full-page ad that astounded me. It touted three new releases for the Nintendo Gameboy system: *Asteroids*, *Centipede*, and *Missile Command*.

This made me rather smug for a moment or two. It also caused me to contemplate some of the more recent releases for Atari 8-bits, games that would blow the socks off any Nintendo title. Games like *Zybex*, *Draconus*, *Cavernia*, *Ninja Commando*, *Stack Up*, *Mirax Force*, and *Binky's Scary School*.

It was at this point that my smugness evaporated, for until recently, most of these titles were virtually unknown on these shores. If you did know about them, you had to get them from England, where they appeared under the imprint of Zeppelin Games. Zeppelin is one of Britain's premier software companies; it not only releases original games, but also acquires games that originally appeared under other labels.

Then, not long ago, I discovered that ALL the games mentioned above are now available from B&C ComputerVisions for $19.95 each. This is great news indeed--the games are superb, and two of them (*Zybex* and *Draconus*) are absolute classics. Outside of virtual reality, you'll not get any closer to inhabiting a science fiction novel.

Zybex

Zybex is a brilliant shoot- em-up reminiscent of Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*. Powered by a jetpack, you start the game flying over an eerie landscape. Your weapon is on auto-fire as you advance against wave after wave of surreal attackers. Some are stationary and some dart at you with unexpected swiftness. Others loop and swirl in hypnotic patterns.

The graphics are brilliant. The scrolling landscape and the enemy hordes are convincingly alien, and the weapons have a menacing, exotic appearance. Your

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flying trooper is superbly animated occasionally, he glances over his shoulder to check behind him, and his legs swing realistically when he accelerates.

There is depth to the game, as well. After the first level (Arcturus) is completed, you may enter any of 11 others. There are also four additional levels, but they are restricted, and can only be entered after the initial 12 have been completed. The graphics vary on each level.

The game opens with a superb piece of music--one of the trademarks, it seems, of European software.

Zybex is a classic that belongs in every gamer's library. [Editor's Note: *Zybex* may already be (illegally) in many gamer's libraries. About two years ago, it was uploaded to GEnie as a public domain game when, in fact, it really wasn't. RR]

Draconus

You know that good things are in store as soon as the title screen appears. Accompanied by a compelling musical theme, the title twists and revolves inside an ornate frame. The credits inform us that, not surprisingly, *Draconus* comes from the same team that produced *Zybex*. This time they've gone totally alien and produced a highly original action adventure.

The hero is Frognum, a bipedal fire-breathing saurian with three-fingered hands. Frognum's task is to find his way through a complex of caverns until he locates and defeats the Tyrant Beast. However, some chambers are filled with water, making them impassable for Frognum. The solution? Find the necessary items to effect a metamorphosis into Draconewt, Frognum's aquatic form.

Draconus' graphics are even better than *Zybex*, for the nature of the game demands screens that are more fully realized. As a result, we are treated to caverns populated by odd creatures, curious traps, and mysterious statuary. The damp, spooky sense of otherworldliness is greatly enhanced by the atmospheric sound effects.

Draconus is brilliant in every respect.

More Good Stuff

Just when my smugness is back in place, I start thinking of all those other great British games which are still unknown over here: *Plastron, Starquake, Hawkquest, Black Lamp, Exploding Wall, Head over Hells...*

Hopefully some enterprising soul will bring these over as well. Until then, check out the Zeppelin games and other imports at:

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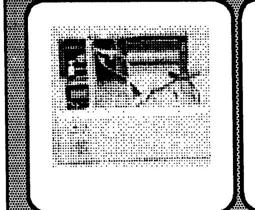

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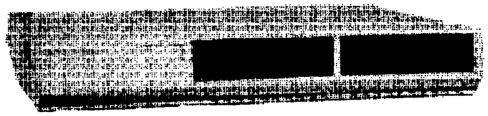

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Handy 8-bit Programs

Making Life a Little Easier with Your Atari Classic

by Thomas J. Andrews
(GEnie: J.ANDREWS24)

(Revised and updated from an article that appeared in the May/June 1992 ACE of Syracuse Newsletter.)

There are a lot of 8-bit programs that aren't ambitious blockbusters, but are just plain handy to have around. Most are short, simple, and easy to use. Here are a few. Some are relatively new, others have been around for years. Some are available from PD sources like the ACE of Syracuse Backstairs BBS (315-458-0118), and others can be typed in from old magazines. All can be found on GEnie and CompuServe (CIS).

Toggle BASIC ROM

XL/XE owners know that to disable the built-in BASIC ROM when booting, you hold down the OPTION key while powering up. But, if you subsequently want to go to BASIC and try to use DOS option B (RUN CARTRIDGE), you get the ominous message, "No Cartridge." If you didn't disable BASIC on booting and then go to DOS, the 8K section of memory containing BASIC is unavailable for use by most binary programs you might load.

So you have to reboot, right? Not necessarily. Matthew Ratcliff wrote a program for *ANALOG* magazine issue #42 (May 1986), called *SWITCH*, that handles this problem. All you have to do is load this program using DOS option L and it toggles the state of the BASIC ROM. If it is on, the program turns it off. If it is off, it turns it on, all without rebooting. It also reports if your XL has the buggy Version B BASIC.

This program can be found on GEnie as **SWITCH.COM** (File #6073), and on CompuServe as **BSWTCH.XMO** in Library 3.

What Kind of File Is That?

Most users identify the types of their files through the use of standardized filename extenders, like .BAS, .LST, .TXT, and .ARC. Some, however, do not, particularly if the file is not intended for other users. If that user doesn't use the file for a long time, he often forgets what type it is. It can get very frustrating, trying to use an unidentified file. The program WHATISIT.COM can help. Most file types have signature formats. This program looks for these signatures, identifies them, and reports the file type back to the user.

WHATISIT.COM is on GEnie as **WHATIS.ARC** (File #4339) and on CIS as **WHATIS.ARC** in Library 3.

Printing Better Listings

One of the best ways to improve programming skills is to study listings of existing programs. You also learn by making small modifications to these programs, adapting them to your own uses. A hard-copy listing is almost essential for this.

Atari BASIC has the LIST "P:" command, which sends the listing directly to the printer rather than to the screen. Unfortunately, this doesn't work correctly with all printers. BASIC programs frequently make use of ATASCII characters that many printers interpret as function commands. For example, while a CHR$(12) is a graphics character to BASIC, it's a form feed command to the printer. Printing a listing with characters like this can produce some mighty strange results.

Several programs have been written to solve this problem. Almost all use the graphics capabilities of the dot-matrix printer to print the characters.

Fontmaster, a shareware program, is one of these. It will print any disk file to an Epson or Gemini compatible printer in any of several print densities, using any GRAPHICS 0 character set; 34 such sets are included in the package, including one for printing *SynCalc* spreadsheets sideways.

Fontmaster can be found on GEnie as File #1967, and on CompuServe as file **FONT.ARC** in Library 3. Incidently, the person who uploaded *Fontmaster* to GEnie in 1987 was some guy with the GEnie address of BOBBRODIE. Seems like I've heard that name somewhere before.

Custom Print, another such program, was published in the March 1985 *Antic* magazine. This program uses the same method as *Fontmaster*, but there are some differences. *Custom Print* has fewer print densities than *Fontmaster*, and it won't print the sideways spreadsheets. *Custom Print* listings are paged, with headings and page numbers. There are two choices for line feeds, allowing more lines per page.

One big advantage to *Custom Print* is that it is written in BASIC, so is more easily modified for personal use. I've modified my own copy to use single sheets as well as continuous paper, and to have a third linefeed choice.

Custom Print was written by Matthew Ratcliff, and is known as **RATLIST.ARC** on GEnie, file #5291.

On CIS, look for `RATLST.ARC` in Library 3.

Cancel That AUTORUN File

Have you ever wanted to boot up DOS but didn't have a disk handy without an AUTORUN.SYS file on it? The June 1989 *Antic* had a type-in solution to that problem. This program would place a short routine at the beginning of an AUTORUN.SYS file. When booting, this routine would be loaded first and would check for a SELECT keypress. If the key were pressed, the rest of the AUTORUN would be ignored and the computer would go to either DOS or BASIC, as appropriate. If the key weren't pressed, the AUTORUN would proceed normally.

This program was named *Autorun Selector* and was written by Jason Strautman. If you don't have the magazine, you can find *Autorun Selector* as `SELECTOR.ARC` (File #6077) on GEnie, and as `SELECT.ARC` in Library 3 on CompuServe.

Where's That Text?

That same June 1989 *Antic* had another handy little program called *Super Locator.* This program searches through any of the files on a disk for a desired search string. When the string is found, the program prints the string itself along with the text immediately preceding and following it. If this is not the right instance of the string, you can go on searching. This is very helpful when trying to find something specific in some text files when you don't remember where you put it.

Super Locator was written by Jeffery Summers, MD, and can be found on GEnie as `LOCATOR.BAS` (file #6074). On CompuServe, look for `LOCATE.BAS` in Library 3.

Hey, It's Typing by Itself!

The next one goes way back to the February 1984 *Antic. Fast Fingers* creates a preloaded keyboard buffer whenever an AUTORUN.SYS file is loaded. The contents of this buffer are then fed to the keyboard handler, one at a time, until the buffer is empty. The result of this is that the computer appears to be typing in its own commands and input. Any legal ATASCII character sequence is allowed, so you could use *Fast Fingers* to go to DOS or BASIC, load a program, and enter the necessary input, all while you sit back and watch. The speed is controllable--a great effect at demonstrations. *Fast Fingers* can stand alone as an AUTORUN.SYS file, or be appended to an existing one. Best of all, it's easily relocated, so it's adaptable to almost any situation.

Fast Fingers was written by Craig Chamberlain, and can be found on GEnie as `FASTFINGERS.BAS` (File #6078). On CompuServe, look for `FSTFNG.BAS` in Library 3.

When One AUTORUN.SYS File Isn't Enough

Occasionally, a user will want to create a disk with an AUTORUN.SYS file consisting of several segments. For example, you might have the above *Autorun Selector* first, followed by a title screen (something to display while the rest loads), followed by a *Fast Fingers* file, and finishing with the main program.

Usually, you would combine all these segments into one big AUTORUN.SYS file. But, if you later decide that you want to change something you have to rebuild the whole thing from scratch.

The program *Multi-AUTORUN,* from the March 1987 *Antic,* is designed for this situation. It makes a small alteration to DOS 2.0 or 2.5, which can be saved permanently on an object disk. After the AUTORUN.SYS file is loaded, the altered DOS looks for a file named AUTORUN1.SYS and loads it if found. Then it looks for AUTORUN2.SYS, and so on until it reaches AUTORUN9.SYS. This allows you to break up that long file into up to 10 segments, any of which can be added, edited, reordered, or deleted. Another change can use AUTORUNA.SYS through AUTORUNZ.SYS, allowing up to 27 segments.

Multi-AUTORUN was written by Bill Bodenstein, and can be found on GEnie as `MULTIAUT.BAS` (File #6079), and on CIS as `MULAUT.BAS` in Library 3.

I wrote two of the most useful programs I own myself. The funny thing is, I didn't realize how useful either one would become when I wrote it.

Print Multi-Column Documents

Print Star was originally written to allow me to print out 40-column DOC files without using up boxes of paper doing it. It reads text records written in 40 or fewer character format and prints them out on an Epson-compatible printer in two or three columns at 6 or 8 lines/inch, paged and numbered, with a heading at the top of each page. It works with any size file.

The latest incarnation, version 1.25, will also print a 3 column page at 7 lines/inch, and at 12 lines/inch using the superscript mode for text. It will print all or part of the pages of a file, and the odd or even numbered pages. With this feature, you can print out the odd pages first, then reload the paper the other side up and print the even numbered pages, thus using the whole sheet of paper. A footer is optional, and may contain page numbers at the user's discretion.

This can be a real paper saver. I recently printed out a file 756 double density sectors long using *Print Star* in the 3-column mode, 8 lines/inch, footer included, and on both sides of the paper. The file came to 27 pages, or just 14 sheets of paper. I shudder to think how much would have been used had I dumped that file to the printer in its original format.

I've also used *Print Star* to print master pages for the ACE of Syracuse Newsletter. Once I even uploaded a *Print Star* output file to our ST Editor to be dumped to his Hewlett-Packard Deskjet 500 printer with the Epson Emulator cartridge.

Print Star 1.25 is known as `PSTR125.ARC` on GEnie, File #5984. On CompuServe, it is `PST125.ARC` in Library 3.

Change Text Formats

The original version of *REFORMAT*, which I called *COL40*, was written to change files into 40 character format for *Print Star*. The current version, *REFORMAT 2.01*, will read text files of any type, strip away the left margin, and put the text into any new record length from 1 to 128 characters. Word wrap and full justification can be on or off and it will automatically translate the ASCII carriage return/line feed combination into the ATASCII RETURN.

This program is a great help when trying to work with the online magazines like ZMAG and ZNET. These magazines are downloaded in an ARCed form, and when unARCed are in ASCII. This makes them difficult to read from the screen. I run the files through *REFORMAT 2.01* with it set to output records of 37 characters. This record length is perfect for reading from DOS or for use with *Print Star*.

REFORMAT is very useful for setting up newsletter pages. Changing line lengths by as little as two or three characters can make a big difference in the look of a page, and the ability to make that change quickly and easily is extremely valuable.

REFORMAT can also output in ASCII, so you could write up a long text file, ARC it, upload it, and other computers can use it.

REFORMAT 2.01 can be found on GEnie as `REFRMAT2.ARC` (File #6059), and on CompuServe as `REFORM.ARC` or `REFOR2.ARC` in Library 5. The second version is bootable, if renamed AUTORUN.SYS. This program (potentially an upgraded version) is also tentatively scheduled to be on the first *Atari Classics* magazine program disk.

More Programs?

There are many other programs like these. If I've missed some of your favorites, why not let us know about them?

Years ago, the publishers of *Antic* and *ANALOG* gave blanket permission to GEnie and CompuServe allowing these services to add published magazine programs to their libraries, as long as they are unaltered. Programs that make modifications to the originals are also allowed. This permission only applies to the programs that appeared in the magazines or as "disk bonus" programs. Software from their commercial ventures, such as programs from Antic's "The Catalog," may not be put into the libraries. *Compute!* magazine recently extended the same permission for their old Atari 8-bit programs.

If you have an interesting, useful, or entertaining program that is public domain, shareware, or from one of these magazines, please upload it to one or both of these services, if it isn't already there. Many people acquired their 8-bit machines after these programs were published, and this is the only way they might have access to them. By uploading programs like these, you help them to enjoy their computers even more.

GEnie files: SWITCH.COM (#6073); WHATIS.ARC (#4339); FONTMASTER (#1967); RATLIST.ARC (#5291); SELECTOR.ARC (#6077); LOCATOR.BAS (#6074); FASTFINGERS.BAS (#6078); MULTIAUT.BAS (#6079); PSTR125.ARC (#5984); REFRMAT2.ARC (#6059).

CompuServe files: BSWTCH.XMO; WHATIS.ARC; FONT.ARC; RATLST.ARC; SELECT.ARC; LOCATE.BAS; FSTFNG.BAS; MULAUT.BAS; PST125.ARC; REFOR2.ARC. All in Library 3 except for REFOR2 which is in Library 5.

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The Gravis MouseStick

A Most Versatile and Sophisticated Input Device

by Robert G. Beard

This was my second visit to my orthopaedic specialist for the gnawing pain in my wrist and arm. This time I didn't need the shot of cortisone nor the six weeks of intensive physical therapy, but only some belly-killing anti-inflammatory pills and the usual ice packs and hot treatments for the inflammation. I always thought all this stuff about computers being bad for your health was only for real wimps who were inventing new ways of malingering on the job. That is, until the strange angle that I held the mouse gave *me* an unmerciful case of tendonitis in my wrist. Along with the pills, my competent physician gave me another prescription: get another mouse, surely there must be some other brand that I wouldn't hold at such a poor angle and would alleviate the cause of my problem. So the hunt began for a different pointer.

I tried different brands of mice, and some were much smoother and some claimed to be more "ergonomically" shaped. I even tried a really interesting pen-mouse and the various roller-balls or trackballs. But none of these quite relieved the stress on my right wrist, especially from "double-clicking." Then I came upon a real find: The Gravis MouseStick. The MouseStick advertises itself as an enhanced mouse replacement with switch joystick emulation, which can be used independently or with other input devices such as mice, joysticks or trackballs. This only begins to tell the story.

First, let me say that the whole MouseStick system exudes quality. The "stick" and base are made of a heavy high-impact plastic with a full-sized foam padded handle that feels great in your hand. The top of the stick has a rapid-fire button (which fires with an audible and tactile click) and is simply lightning quick. On the base, there are two more buttons, although the bottom button largely duplicates the handle button in operation.

What is strange about this stick is that it is programmable! Another box, a MouseStick control unit, with a built-in microprocessor and 16K ROM, has a large LCD for menu selection display! The manual says that the MouseStick is the most versatile and sophisticated input device currently on the market. They are starting to make a believer of me.

To get started, you only have to connect the Mousestick (like connecting a mouse), select Atari mode (not Amiga mode), adjust the stick tension (this is high tech, so *you* decide how much tension on the stick you want!), and then center the stick by pressing one of the base buttons. Once you have selected a "normal" setup, you can have the MouseStick remember it, and the computer will boot with this as the StartUp mode. There are preprogrammed settings for auto-centering (so that the mouse pointer returns to the center of the screen after you are done pointing at something) for all the Atari ST screen resolutions. If you use some other rez, you can create custom settings.

Before going any further, I have to elaborate on how I use the MouseStick; that is, I use it instead of the standard Atari mouse. I find the Mousestick to be silky, responsive, easy-to-use, and simply a joy. Within minutes of plugging it in, I was already used to how the stick felt and how much easier it was to travel the whole screen faster and more accurately than with the normal mouse. To me, it is also easier to grab the MouseStick, do a pointing action, and return to the keyboard for keying in information.

The MouseStick is also a very nice joystick when shifted into Joystick mode. I found the fire button to be particularly rapid in killing nasty aliens. However, I also thought that some games still felt better with an older model joystick (probably because I have gotten used to the way that they "feel" with those games.) This "feel" issue is entirely a personal thing, but I can say that almost every game or simulation was at least as good and some better with the MouseStick for me.

To change from one mode to another, you must click rapidly on the console "left mouse" button rapidly four or more times, and hold down the button. The LCD screen then reads out that you are "Entering the editor." The editor has seven choices, such as "recall a setup," "program a button," etc. This may sound complicated, but it really is not—the 73-page manual plus the MouseStick Menu make it easy to pick a different setting and to save up to four settings for quick recall. (For example, you may want to have a vectoring mode for a flight simulator, a 320x200 for low resolution and a 640x400 autocentering for desktop publishing.)

The Mousestick claims that it has 1200 point resolution and uses true optomechanical digital output. What that means for the user is an excellent pointer device with the functionality of a mouse and the feel of joystick. The MouseStick retails in the $70-75 range about what you might pay for an optical mouse. But you sure get more for your money! Oh, and by the way, it does not hurt my wrist!

QWKsilver:

Offline Messaging on the Atari XL/XE!

by Bobby Clark

When I posted that I was working on a .QWK compatible mail interpreter for the Atari XL/XE on the FidoNet Atari 8-bit echo, I scarcely imagined the tremendous response that this would generate. Well, after many hours of hard work, blood, sweat, and tears, I have finally finished *.QWKsilver 0.2.*

Programming Language

.QWKsilver 0.2 was written in compiled TurboBASIC. My main reason for using this language is that I am somewhat unfamiliar with C and other languages, and do not have access to Action! (which I have heard is an excellent language). One nice feature of TurboBASIC (and Atari BASIC) is the ability to address the disk media using NOTE and POINT to access any point along a sequential file immediately. This allows for faster disk access without having to read through previous records and, I hope, speeds up the process of reading new messages!

What is .QWK?

Essentially, this program works like the *Silly Little Message Reader* (SLMR) and *Off-Line Express* (OLX) readers on the IBM in that you can download mail off of your local Bulletin Board System (BBS) (assuming it has a .QWK door installed) and read and reply to it while offline. This helps save time while online, which can be especially helpful when you're calling long-distance. *.QWK version 0.2* has completed initial beta-testing. Most of the bugs, which I've fixed, were uncovered with a bit of help from Frank Walters on the FidoNet Atari 8-bit echo.

Now, there are a few folks who don't know what .QWK offline messaging is. After all, not many .QWK readers exist for the 8-bit, if I am informed correctly. .QWK is an offline format developed by Sparkware back in 1987 for use with the Q-mail door, which was in widespread use on PCBoard systems. A main advantage of the .QWK format is that message files can be compressed into smaller packets than with other mail formats. This format became so popular that it found its way to most other BBS systems under different names like Tomcat (for Wildcat!), SuperQWK (for SuperBBS), Blue Wave (for Telegard) and countless other interpretations (even for Atari STs).

Using .QWKsilver

Using a .QWK door is rather elementary. Most times, when you download a .QWK packet using a .QWK door, it will be compressed using a format like .ZIP, which is very popular on the IBM front. Unfortunately, the 8-bit computer doesn't support a .ZIP format for file-crunching. Fortunately, most QWK doors will allow you to select amongst a wide range of compression formats, including PKARC and PKPAK, two formats supported by Bob Puff's *SuperUnArc* and *SuperArc* programs for the 8-bit. Generally, when you get the .QWK packet offline, you will UnArc the packet before reading it.

The packet contains a message file, a BBS info file, plus lots of pointer/index files. Some packets even contain the BBS's logon screen, bulletins, and logoff screen. After you reply offline, your messages will be Arced into a .REP packet which is then uploaded to the .QWK door the next time you log on. The .QWK door will automatically move your replies into their appropriate message conferences for you after UnArcing your .REP packet.

.QWKsilver 0.2 will interpret .QWK packets that have already been UnArced (which means you should run your packet through Bob Puff's *SuperUnArc* before trying to interpret it). The program has several functions from its main menu. You can configure the default settings for *.QWKsilver*, which include screen colors, setting directories for your messages, usage of taglines, and other functions.

Version 0.2 of *.QWKsilver* also contains a real-time clock function that will let you set and keep the current time and date. The current time will constantly be displayed in the upper-left corner of your screen. There is also a read function, which will automatically prepare your mail for you and shoot the BBS logon screen up when finished. You are also given the option to quit to DOS.

Reading .QWK Mail

From within the Read menu, you will see a short bit of info printed about your packet indicating the software used to prepare the packet, the BBS, its phone number, and the sysop's name. From here, you may select more functions. You can view your BBS's news bulletins, read through the messages, post messages, or send E-mail to the sysop. You are also given the option of quitting back to the main menu, whereupon your BBS logoff screen will be displayed for you.

The reading function is a bit sparse at the moment. On version 0.1, the messages are all read sequentially from beginning to end, though more complex features including newscan, personal search, and other searches will be implemented with 0.2. As the messages are displayed, a 40-column wordwrapped screen is used, which makes those 80-column messages a bit easier on the eyes.

The display looks a bit choppy, but readable. There are several commands available while reading. You can reply to the current message, reread the current message, export the current message to disk or printer (in version 0.2), proceed to the next message, or quit to the read menu. Each message is displayed along with pertinent data such as message number, conference name, who wrote the message, who it's addressed to, the subject, and the type of message (private, public, etc.). A pause function is also present, pausing the display after 23 lines of text.

.QWK Mail Replies

Replying to messages is straightforward. You will be prompted for whom you wish to address the message to, which conference you want to post in, and the subject of your message. All of these may be defaulted by hitting RETURN. You may also decide to move your reply into a different conference. A conference listing is available for this purpose. The same format is used for posts from the main message menu, but Comments to the sysop will automatically be addressed to the sysop's name.

Entering the message is fairly simple. A 40-column wordwrap is in effect, and you can backspace on the same line. No other editing is currently supported. You also have several commands that will allow you to save your message, quote from an incoming message, or import an external file into your message. The commands are activated through usage of the backslash key ("/") at the beginning of a line. The quoting function is fairly straightforward. When quoting, five lines of the message you are quoting from will be displayed on the screen. You will be asked to specify a start and ending range for quoting. You can specify 0-0 to skip, or control-3 to return to entering your message. If you mess up seriously, doing "/A" will abort your message.

The export and import functions, included with version 0.2, are very useful. The export function allows you to take the current message you are reading and dump it to either the printer or an external disk file. When dumping to a disk file, you are given the option of using ASCII or ATASCII format. A date/time stamp is included in the dump, which will indicate the export time and date and the source BBS where the packet containing this message was prepared.

Importing a message into *.QWKsilver* involves inserting a prepared message into your reply while entering your message. You are asked for the source file of your prepared text. No disk swapping is supported, so any file that uses the same drive as your message will be assumed to be on the same disk.

Tagline Support

Another feature of *.QWKsilver* is the tagline function. Taglines are those witty little sayings you always see at the ends of messages from those people using SLMR and other offline readers. The taglines are stored sequentially in a text file, and may be edited on a word processor. *.QWKsilver* will insert a tagline into your message upon saving it, unless you turn off the taglines in your default settings. You may either have *.QWKsilver* rotate among your tagline list each message, or have them chosen at random.

Minor Shortcomings

One bug that will be fixed shortly in version 0.21 is the open buffer problem. Many DOSes aren't set up for more than two OPEN files simultaneously. This causes an ERROR 161 to pop up if you try to quote or save your message. You can fix this yourself by configuring your DOS for 4 open files.

There are a few other things that *.QWKsilver* doesn't do that I am considering for future versions. DOS 2.5 is all that's supported now; I hope to include support for other DOS systems, like MyDOS 4.5, later on. Some people have successfully used MyDOS 4.5 already, but *.QWKsilver* does not support subdirectories. *.QWKsilver* is also a victim of those generic TurboBASIC/SpartaDOS memory conflicts, so it crashes with Sparta. Any ideas on this one? Finally, the realtime clock I've implemented is not compatible with the vectors used by ICD for the R-TIME 8 cartridge.

Where to Get .QWKsilver

QWKS02.ARC can be File Requested (FREQ'ed) from: KAUG BBS at (615) 691-0113, FidoNet Node Number 1:3615/17, or Blistered & Offline at (615) 689-3797, FidoNet Node Number 1:3615/40. It is also available on GEnie (File #6122) and CompuServe (QWKS02.ARC) in Library 2.

When I get all the bugs worked out, I will make this program shareware, where a five dollar donation will get you free updates of the program through the mail. I know a lot of you FidoNet 8-bitters have been eagerly anticipating this program, and I do hope you find it useful.

Any questions about this program may be sent to me either on the Atari 8-bit FidoNet echo conference, via netmail to 1:3615/40 or US Mail to:

Bobby Clark
469 Wallace Road
Luthrell, TN 37799

[Editor's Note: You can also e-mail any questions or comments to your Current Notes 8-bit Editor and I'll forward them to Bobby. RR]

OutBurST!

If time is money, this utility program could be worth a fortune.

by David McNamara

Most users of *Pagestream* love the easy-to-master interface, which allows them ready access to the many powerful features of this popular desktop publishing program. The slick interface almost makes up for the abysmally slow printing times that have been a *Pagestream* hallmark from the beginning, and which continue through the most recent release (2.2). Pretty output comes with a price, often measured in minutes per page. Enter *OutBurST!*, a utility program from Straight Edge Software that promises to reduce the time it takes to print data to HP Laserjet and HP Deskjet compatible printers.

A Printer Picker-Upper

The purpose of *OutBurST!* is to speed up the transfer of data through the parallel (printer) port. For owners of such popular printers as HP Deskjets, Laserjets, and Laserjet clones, this can result in substantially quicker printing times, as data flies along the parallel highway, rather than crawls.

The reason this matters is that programs such as *Pagestream*, which produce graphic output, must exercise independent control of every dot on the page, which, in turn, means they have to deal with a lot of data. In the high-resolution 300-dot-per-inch mode of the deskjet or laserjet printer, a single page has a megabyte worth of dots, most of which have to be sent to the printer one at a time. Text only pages can cut down on the transmission requirements by sending samples of each character only once, then telling the printer to use them over and over again. Still, a significant amount of time can be eaten up just transferring the data.

Atari found a unique way around this problem by using the DMA port to send data to their laser printers. However, Atari printers have been relatively expensive. Furthermore, since no one else uses this interface, you're pretty much stuck with an Atari computer; you can't share the printer with anything else. In fact, the Atari lasers won't even work with the Falcon 030, which no longer has the ST-style DMA port. Thus, there are plenty of reasons not to stick with Atari printers, even if they do avoid the data transmission bottleneck.

But why should a piece of software be able to accelerate hardware? This piece of legerdemain relies on optimizing the software than controls the hardware. Unfortunately, the ST BIOS routine that handles the printer port isn't as quick as it could be. *OutBurST!* replaces the standard parallel output routine in ROM with its own terminate-and-stay-resident one that installs itself as an autorun program.

Proof of the Pudding

Does it work? Yes! I tried printing the "Anywhere Times" tutorial page in *Pagestream* without using *OutBurST!* on my 4 megabyte STe. My NEC Silentwriter Model 95 printer in HP PCL mode took 6 minutes and 32 seconds to do so. After installing *OutBurST!* the same page came out of the printer in 2 minutes and 19 seconds, three times faster! *OutBurST* also comes with a patch program to modify the printer driver in *Pagestream* to work even better with *OutBurST!* Using this driver along with the main program reduced the print time even further, to 2:02. Since *Pagestream* took 1 minute and 20 seconds to think about what to send before it began to transmit data, the transmission process itself was reduced from 5:12 to 42 seconds, 7.5 times faster!

There is more good news. *OutBurST!* happily works with any program that sends data over the parallel port. It is particularly effective for those programs that send graphic pages with their huge data requirements, such as those that rely on GDOS. For example, the GIRL.GEM image supplied with *EasyDraw* takes 9:24 to print on my setup using the Font GDOS Laserjet.sys driver. With *OutBurST!* the same image pops out of the printer in 3:04. It also works fine with Dviprint and TeX documents.

Straight Edge also includes a special *Calamus* driver to speed up Laserjet output with this already speedy program. They claim a gain in speed from 25 to 10 seconds for a page in their tests. I don't have a copy of *Calamus* to test this claim, but I believe them. Do you care about 15 seconds, or are you impressed by a factor of 2.5 increase in speed. Can a program ever run fast enough when you're waiting for output?

Caveats

Of course, there are some uncertainties with the *OutBurST!* approach. I haven't seen any compatibility problems so far. This program seems very stable. Note there is an "experimental" version that is supposed to be slightly faster, but slightly more flaky, included with the disk. I didn't see any speed increase with the experimental version, and therefore didn't see any reason to chance any software oddities. But anytime a program hooks into the Trap vectors used by the operating system, there is the chance of software conflicts, especially with other programs that try to manipulate BIOS routines. Note that *OutBurST!* seems to work fine with *Warp 9* and GDOS, at least.

The main question is how much good the program will do with your computer setup. Your mileage (speed increase) definitely might vary. The main imponderable is the speed of the printer's port. Printer manufacturers have become concerned with port speed only very recently, with the advent of popular graphic output programs. HP, for example, has increased the rate at which the parallel port accepts data from 10 kB/sec in previous printers to 50kB/sec on the Laserjet IIIP and IIP+; its most recent models. Note that the "Anywhere Times" page actually has 590 kB of data, which means that the ordinary ST parallel port routine runs at roughly 1.9 kB/sec. With *OutBurST!* (and my printer) that increases to 14 kB/sec. Even if your printer port isn't a speed demon, you should see some improvement with *OutBurST!*

Straight Edge mentions NEC and Panasonic printers, in addition to new HPs, as particularly good for high speeds. I haven't been able to find any references to the port speed of various Deskjet models. I'm sure they are all capable of better than 2 kb/sec. Of course, printers that spend a considerable time actually printing, such as dot-matrix or bubblejets, also will see less improvement, since the transmission time is a smaller percentage of the total output time.

The other important factor is the amount of data that the program sends in order to print the page. Text only programs may only send 2000-3000 bytes per page, which take almost no time to send even at a slow rate. Postscript output requires fewer bytes per comparable page than LaserJet graphics pages, and thus a smaller speed increase is found. The same "Anywhere Times" page took 3:32 to print from *Pagestream* to a Postscript printer. With *OutBurST!* print time improved to 2:32. This is a much smaller percentage increase, but hey, you saved a minute!

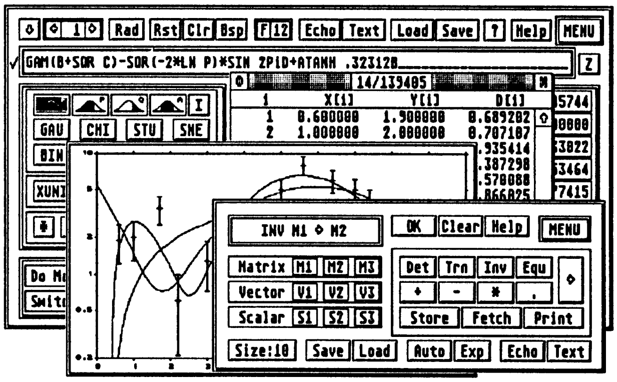
The Big Question

Should you purchase *OutBurST!*? There are a number of factors to consider. Do you have a printer attached to your parallel port? If not, the program won't do you any good. Is the printer relatively fast, or does it spend most of the time actually trying to print. Most dot matrix printers won't see much improvement. Do you like staring at unchanging alert boxes that show printing is in progress? Some people could find this very relaxing. It drives me crazy. I am extremely pleased with *OutBurST!* and recommend it heartily. It's one of the most cost effective ways I know to get a more responsive ST.

[OutBurST! $20 + $2 shipping and handling. Straight Edge Software, PO Box 6407, Nashua, New Hampshire, 03061.]

El Cal

The Math Machine.



From senior high to Fermilab - if you do any engineering or scientific calculations, then you need this program.

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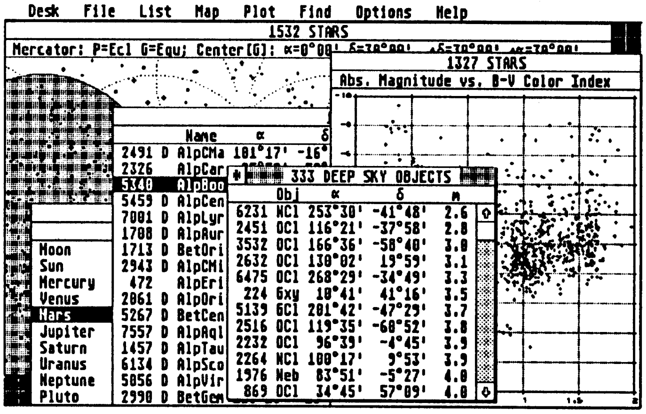
⇨ The new Version 2.2 has upgraded graphic capabilities. **$63.**

Star Base



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FreeZe Dried Terminal

Innovative, Easy To Use And Even Has Bells And Whistles!

Review by Sam Van Wyck

I don't care what the ads say, getting any new terminal program up and running comfortably isn't easy. That goes for *FreeZe Dried Terminal* (FzDT) by FreeZe Dried Software (FzDS) as well, although it was, by far, the easiest of the four that I have tried to date. Considering Big Dum-Dum Irving's ability to misunderstand or screw up anything connected to a computer, this constitutes high praise, indeed!

I had been using *VanTerm* and was pleased with the ease of use and flexibility offered. However, it lacked a Z-Modem option (Version 4.0), and occasionally had problems displaying the capture buffer. Thus, when offered a chance to try *FzDT*, I was ready to accept the challenge.

The program arrives on a single disk. Documentation, late breaking news and commentary are all contained in several text files. All are interesting and, as might be imagined, the docs are vital to the complete utilization of the program.

Installation Time

Installation of *FzDT* is as simple and trouble-free as can be. Run the program and it looks for a Configuration File. Naturally, this doesn't exist yet, so it tells you not to worry and proceeds to create one. Initially, this is a sort of general purpose arrangement but was, in my case at least, quite sufficient to get me up and running. Means exist for the skilled user to make just about any modification imaginable.

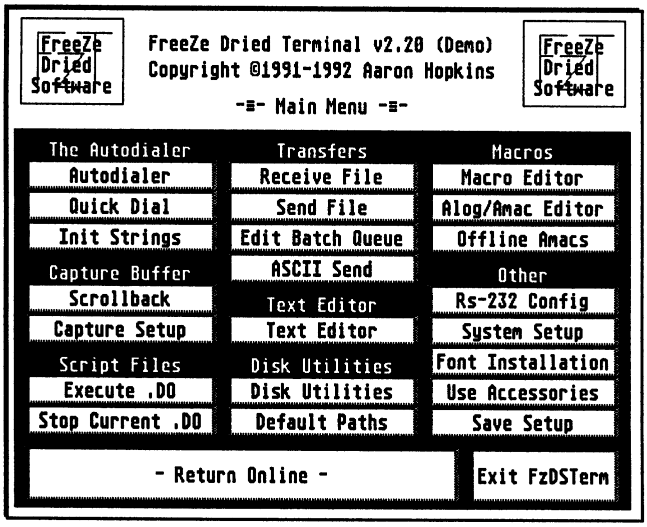


Figure 1. The Main Menu of FzDT. Selections may be made by mouse, F–Key or ‹ALT+Alphanumeric› key.

A series of questions and answers leads the user through a list of options. When completed, such things as Baud speed, Duplex setting, capture configuration and such will all be placed in the Configuration file to be executed at bootup. Naturally, these may be modified at a later time if necessary.

Once the program loads and is running, it is time either to read the docs or begin experimenting. My instinct is *ALWAYS* to do the reading first but the Main and subsequent menu choices are so well laid out and intuitive that anybody of moderate intelligence should be able to muddle through. The program design is extremely forgiving, always leaving a way out or back in case of mistake. To date, I have been unable to crash it or corner myself in any position from which only a reset will recover.

The Front Door

The main menu provides convenient access to all the major functions. Entry is by either point-and-click, keystroke or, depending upon where you are at the time, a single press of either the right or left mouse button. Navigation is assisted by a very complete Help key function.

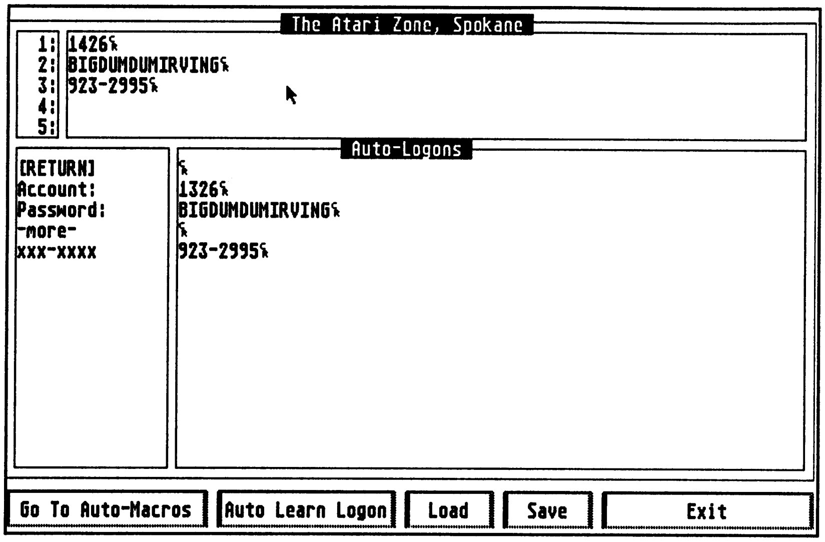
Once aboard, a number of options and activities are available. A brief listing of the more desirable features includes:

Up to 19,200 baud capability;
VT–52, ANSI, UBT– and Instant Graphics;
F, X, Y and Z Modem plus the ability to add more;
45 slot Autodialer;
Auto–Logon sequences plus an Auto–Learn function;
Auto–Macros for each BBS plus 40 (Manual?) macros;
Text editor that is virtually a word processor;
Flash! compatible .DO files;
Configurable capture buffer that is easy to use;
Disk manager with format and archive shell;
Variety of available fonts.

The Autodialer and Autolog

If desired, the user may go directly to the online screen and, by means of Hayes compatible commands, initiate a call. However, any number that will be called regularly is best placed in the Autodial menu. Simply insert the name of the BBS and its number. A single click then initiates the call.

Well, that sounds simple enough, doesn't it? The nice thing about it is that it is just that simple-if you



```
1: 1426↵
2: BIGDUMDUMIRVING↵
3: 923-2995↵
4:
5:

[RETURN]      ↵
Account:      1326↵
Password:     BIGDUMDUMIRVING↵
-more-        ↵
xxx-xxxx      923-2995↵
```

Figure 2. The Logon Screen. Data in the upper section may be sent by ‹ALT+n› keystroke. Responses for an Autologon sequence appear in the lower box.

want it that way. On the other hand, by the author's own admission, this program strives for perfection. As a result, in the Autodialer one is able to add the following (I quote from the docs):

"There are 45 slots to fill in info about different BBSes. This info includes the name of the BBS, the telephone number, 2 lines of comments, the baud rate and serial port settings, the emulation to use, the Autologon sequence, the script file to execute upon connection, 5 individual macros and whether or not the autologs and automacros are on. You may leave all of this blank except for the phone number."

In short, this part of the program can be as simple or as complicated as the user wants to make it.

If the "Autolog" function has been available somewhere before, I have never seen it. In the course of this review, I began logging onto boards that I'd not used before. It always makes me nervous to stop during the process to write all the data prompts down prior to creating a logon sequence. Also, I usually forget to turn on the capture buffer (Big Dum-Dum Irving makes LOTS of mistteaks!).

Autolog helps to find a way around this. When invoked, it looks for a portion of the the screen line preceding a keyboard input. These are then placed onscreen. After logging on, one might read:

Your User Number: | 416
Your Password: | BIGDDIRVING

plus any other data that was necessary to get you online and operational. The lines on the left are the prompts; those on the right are your replies. These may then be modified if necessary and then saved.

Up to five lines of passwords and other necessary information may also be stored for manual retrieval via the ‹ALT + NUMBER› keys.

Getting into Terminal Mode

Most of the functions in *FzDT* may be accessed in more than one way. For instance, getting into Terminal mode from the Main Menu is as simple as clicking on the "GO ONLINE" box; or one may simply press the right mouse button.

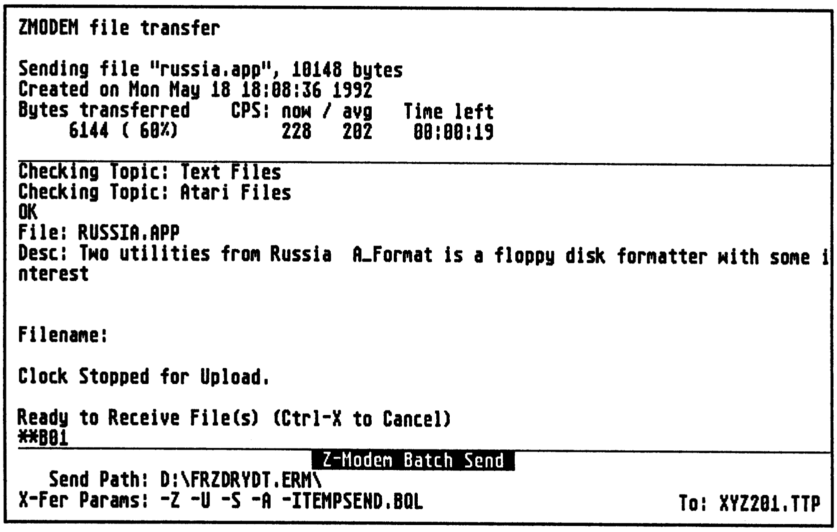
In Terminal Mode, the caller is able to connect via the modem to another user, bulletin board or online service. It is essentially a blank screen with a status line at the bottom. As the program is used to dial, logon and interact with the remote computer, this fills up with text and graphics representing both transmitted and received data. If the Capture Buffer is open, the material will also be recorded in memory or on disk for future reference.

A Text Editor, sort of a miniature Word Processor, provides access to the screen, the capture buffer and disk. Material may be imported created, edited and saved, all while online. One application of this might be writing a review of the program while waiting through a download or upload or attending a roundtable BBS session.

A Type-Ahead Buffer allows text to be created onscreen and released to the modem by a touch of the ‹RETURN› key.

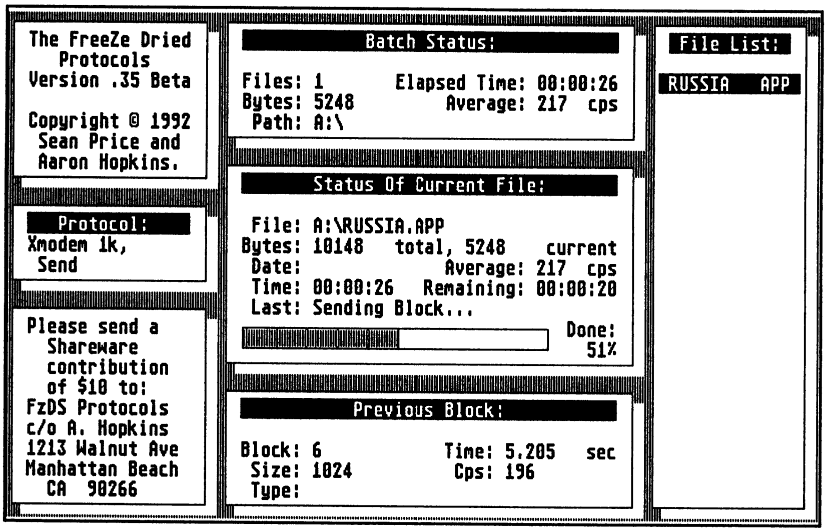
File Transfers and Protocols

In addition to sending and receiving posted messages, E-Mail and other text-based information, the transfer of complete files or programs constitutes one of the most popular functions of telecommunication.



```
ZMODEM file transfer

Sending file "russia.app", 10148 bytes
Created on Mon May 18 18:08:36 1992
Bytes transferred    CPS: now / avg   Time left
     6144 ( 60%)          228   202    00:00:19

Checking Topic: Text Files
Checking Topic: Atari Files
OK
File: RUSSIA.APP
Desc: Two utilities from Russia  A_Format is a floppy disk formatter with some i
nterest


Filename:

Clock Stopped for Upload.

Ready to Receive File(s) (Ctrl-X to Cancel)
**B01

   Send Path: D:\FRZDRYDT.ERM\
X-Fer Params: -Z -U -S -A -ITEMPSEND.BQL                            To: XYZ201.TTP
```

Figure 3. The Z—Modem File Transfer Page. A Z—Modem transfer is in progress.



```
The FreeZe Dried
   Protocols
Version .35 Beta

Copyright © 1992
 Sean Price and
 Aaron Hopkins.

    Protocol:
Xmodem 1k,
 Send

Please send a
  Shareware
  contribution
  of $10 to:
FzDS Protocols
c/o A. Hopkins
1213 Walnut Ave
Manhattan Beach
  CA  90266

              Batch Status:
Files: 1         Elapsed Time: 00:00:26
Bytes: 5248          Average: 217  cps
 Path: A:\

          Status Of Current File:
 File: A:\RUSSIA.APP
Bytes: 10148    total, 5248    current
 Date:                Average: 217  cps
 Time: 00:00:26   Remaining: 00:00:20
 Last: Sending Block...
                                   Done:
                                    51%

              Previous Block:
Block: 6              Time: 5.205    sec
 Size: 1024            Cps: 196
 Type:

 File List:
RUSSIA   APP
```

Figure 4. File transfers in X and Y modem are tracked in excruciating detail.

Once again, this is facilitated by *FzDT's* many well thought out features.

Clicking on the File Send or Receive button brings up a submenu showing the various file transfer protocols available. *FzDT* comes with three varieties of X-Modem, two Ys, a Z and an F. Just in case those aren't sufficient for your needs, there is space for 8 more, a total of 16. Click on the desired protocol, then on "Begin Send" (or "-Receive") and you are presented with a file selector. Choose the desired file and click on "OK" and the program takes over from there. During the transfer, a most informative page is displayed showing Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Your File Transfer and probably a few things that you didn't: a bar graph, file size, amount sent in KBytes and percent, average transfer speed; you name it, it's probably there.

Although I have been unable to try the F-Modem Batch protocol, the Z-Batch works beautifully. Following the transfer request, a file selector is presented from which the individual files are chosen. These are then presented on a transfer menu where additions or deletions may be made. Clicking on SEND starts the process, which continues automatically until complete.

I tend to panic at the thought of making an ass of myself on a public board, damaging a database or committing some form of public foolishness. Thus, it is very pleasant to find a program that borders upon instinctive and intuitive during the online session. This is one of the very few where, if you simply go and try something, it will probably work.

Macros

Macros must be very important things to the serious telecommunicator. *FzDT* provides space for 45 of them, and two pages of explanation. Unfortunately, I don't understand at all what they are all about as I have never used one before and the docs on this section are, to be charitable, terrible. Regard: "Explanation of Macro Functions: Not only can macros automate your typing, but they can also do many other things for you. You may also mix the two, as most macro functions may be placed anywhere in a macro and may even be used repeatedly in each macro." One wonders what the "other things" might be. "Macro, go fetch tea while I finish this review." Naaaah!

If you're still with the program at this point, you may edit your macros by either clicking on "Macro Editor" from the main menu or pressing [F5]. Good luck and, if you figure it out, please let me know. Meanwhile, I'll fumble along without.

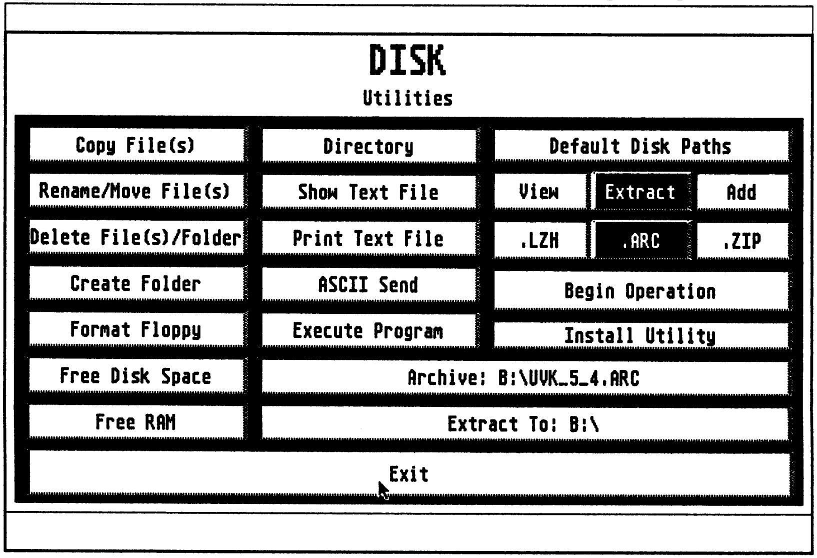
Disks, Files and Archivers

A full complement of file manipulations is available within *FzDT* and most may be activated by mouse or Function Key. Among these are Copy, Rename/Move, Delete File, Remove/Create Folder and Format. Other functions include Free Disk Space, Free RAM, Directory, Show/Print/ASCII Send Text file and Execute Program from inside FzDT.

An archive shell similar to ARCSHELL provides access to LZH, ARC and ZIP compression and extraction.

The Deluxe Accessory Package

Along with audible bells and whistles, which exist to announce certain events, comes a package of famil-



Archive: B:\UVK_5_4.ARC

Extract To: B:\

Figure 5. The File Manipulation menu offers many options from within the

iar and not so familiar accessories. Various customizing options are available, such as setting the screen colors, the RS-232 and internal configurations. One interesting option is the Daily Log, which will record the date, time, duration and number of every call you complete and save it for a specified number of days.

Background "events," such as a corner clock, may be turned on as often as desired. Otherwise, they may be left inactive to speed up processing.

Most welcome is the BBS Timeout Logoff Pause. Many boards interpret a lack of activity for more than a minute as an indication that the user has died or succumbed to a Mac Attack and will terminate the session. *FzDT* allows you to defeat this by automatically sending a chosen string at specified intervals. For instance, you might send a space/backspace after 60 seconds of inactivity. Since the host board usually sends an inquiry before terminating, the program will wait, if requested, for the specified interval *and* some input from the host before responding. If you simply have to be gone and don't want to fool around, pressing ‹ALT-Z› starts the process until you return.

Since *FzDT* works with several telecommunication systems, it provides fonts compatible with ANSI, VT-52 and UBBS-Term. Later versions will add substantially to this list.

The Capture Buffer works flawlessly. It may be sized according to the memory available. The contents may be automatically saved, flushed or wrapped (oldest out/newest in). Viewing by line, page or simply going from one end to the other is as simple as point and click. It may be edited, blocked, deleted, moved and saved while online or off.

.DO files from FLASH! are compatible with FzDT.

The Documentation Problem

On a scale of 1-10, I'd give the documentation a 5.5. Sorry Aaron, I know you have a lot of time and effort in them but they simply leave too many holes and questions to rate any better. But don't go 'way mad because your program, which is really your Magnum Opus here, is fantastic. Its presentation and structure more than make up for the shortcomings of the documentation.

The pertinent (operational) printout covers 34 pages of edited operational instructions printed in 12 pitch 80 character lines. Its organization is good and parts of it are most helpful. However, Aaron Hopkins, the creator of this gem, candidly admits that they need a bit of work and was seeking assistance along this line.

My main complaint is that, while some instructions may be given as to how a feature may be used, it is not at all clear exactly why it should be used and vice versa. The section on Macros illustrates this. With a well-written set of instructions covering both "how" and "why," this program would be unbeatable.

Troubles in River City

In a README file dated 6 July 92, Mr. Hopkins refers to a number of mistakes and "learning experiences" and promises "immediate" steps by him and Freeze Dried Software to restore order. Apparently, a number of people have been getting exercised over an apparent lack of response to letters, E-Mail and orders. Despite this promise, I have received nothing from him or *FzDS* in the month since I sent a check and registration. The check has, however, been cashed. As of this writing, GEnie has no listing for either Aaron Hopkins or FreeZe Dried Software.

He also speaks of a Version 3.0 which, when and if completed, would add even more goodies to this already excellent program. Despite the fact that V. 2.20 is a Demo, it is of such quality that I will NOT feel cheated if I never hear from either the author or FzDS. However, I am going to continue under the assumption that both the author and his company are basically honest and will sooner or later get their respective acts together. Until then, I will enjoy the use of what I have. It's still a great bargain!

Caveat Emptor (Think Before You Buy!)

Despite my opinion of the *FzDT* program and my hope for a favorable outcome of the situation, I feel obligated to refer the reader to the Telecommunications category (CAT 8) on GEnie. Topic 6 is devoted entirely to *FzDT* and, after reading messages dating from last July to mid-November, I must report that reaction to the program, and especially its support, is *not good.* In general, and barring a few bugs mostly involved with print functions, people seem to think the program ranges anywhere from good to fantastic. Almost universally, the opinion of Mr. Hopkins, FzDS and support for the terminal program ranges from bad to horrible.

To cut through a lot of talk and argument, if you plan to use *FzDT,* you should do so solely on the basis of the Demo Version 2.20. Frankly, I think it's worth the registration fee by itself. However, there are a lot of people out there who do not agree with this and have stated so loudly and publicly. Maybe they're right. The new user should approach this program with both caution and an open mind.

FreeZe Dried Terminal is the product of Aaron Hopkins and FreeZe Dried Software. The suggested registration fee of $25.00 entitles the user to a "Key" that will allow direct downloading of future updates. Since the *FzDT* program utilizes another program, XYZ201.TTP, a donation of $10.00 is also requested for its author raising the total cost to $35.00. Both the author and FreeZe Dried Software may be contacted (although they may not respond) at:

Freeze Dried Software
1213 Walnut Ave.
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 USA.

GEnie® Notes

by Lou Rocha

Welcome to the inaugural column of GEnie Notes-your channel to points of interest on the General Electric Network for Information Exchange. In each issue, this column will cover news and information of interest to Atari owners and, hopefully, show you what you are missing if you are not a GEnie subscriber. Please send your comments to Joe Waters (JOE.WATERS) or drop in to GEnie and leave mail to FEEDBACK. All suggestions are welcome!

RT Sysop-Darlah Potechin

I am really pleased that *Current Notes* has decided to have a regular column about GEnie. As the official online support center for Atari Corp., as well as the home of the Independent Association of Atari Developers (IAAD), GEnie has been firmly established as the premier meeting place for all of us Atari types. In fact, in the Atari Roundtables on GEnie you will encounter ongoing dialog on all issues relevant to you and your Atari, regardless of which Atari you own.

Our ST library has nearly 28,000 files available for downloading. In short, we are really proud of what we can offer anyone who shares our common interest. Watch this column for some interesting and informative facts about the most exciting and vibrant online Atari community in the world!

My thanks to Joe Waters of *Current Notes* for allowing us this opportunity to share some of the reality of GEnie with his readers. I would also like to thank all of our GEnie customers, without whom none of this would have any meaning. Thank you all.

Sincerely,
Darlah Potechin,
RT Sysop–Atari Roundtables–GEnie

Darlah's Treat

For the last few months, visitors to the ST RoundTable have been greeted by a bannered notice on the club door announcing Darlah's Treat. No, this is not a fast-food coupon giveaway. Darlah's Treat is a free file download, sponsored by Sysop Darlah Potechin. Each month, the RT sysops put their heads together and find a really interesting or useful file for the members. A few months ago the treats began with (**ARC_LZH2**) a self-extracting kit for using the ARC and LZH file compression protocols common in all GEnie Library files; then a demo (**INVDEMO**) of *INVISION Elite*, a very powerful graphics program that is now distributed by DMC Publishing of *Calamus* fame; followed by another great demo of Oregon Research Associates' must-have hard drive utility program, *Diamond Edge* (**EDGEDEMO**). The fourth treat was a demo of Compo's wordprocessor, *That's Write 2* (**TW2_DEMO**) followed by a neat arcade game that is playable on two ST's via a midi-port hookup–*Midi Battle* (**MIDIBATL**).

As the popularity of Darlah's Treat continued to grow, the RT was able to program a second slot for a free download and the next selections were color and mono versions of *OXYD* from *Dongleware*–one of the best arcade games to come along in a while. At press time, Darlah had a demo (**PHNXDEMO**) of the new *Phoenix 512* graphics rendering program from world-famous international developer Lexicor and the sysops were engaged in another round of nominations for the January Treat! It is not easy to pick one when so many great files are uploaded to the ST Library every month!

Independent Association of Atari Developers

As Darlah mentioned, GEnie is the home of the IAAD–providing the most effective communication channel to Atari developers for both hardware and software support.

To give you an idea of the scope of IAAD involvement on GEnie, Dorothy Brumleve, newly-elected President, stopped by with a few words:

"The IAAD is an organization of third-party hardware and software developers supporting the Atari ST family of computers. Unique in the industry, the IAAD works to provide its membership with help in marketing, packaging, technical matters, and other issues of interest to third-party commercial developers.

"GEnie's ST RT provides the IAAD with a private bulletin board Category for members' discussions and a private Library for files of interest to members. Members also make ample use of mail services. There is also a DEV RT run by Atari for all registered developers on GEnie, so the IAAD's discussions typically do not duplicate the threads in that area, but rather serve to supplement them and complement them. Virtually all of our members have public Topics and Categories elsewhere in the ST RT Bulletin Board or in other RT's on GEnie to help the public with the use of our products. GEnie provides a meeting place for the entire online Atari community, so it's an ideal vehicle for individual developers to reach our customers with new product announcements, updates, etc. The IAAD as a group also uses GEnie to communicate with Atari and the public through press releases, mail, and even RoundTable Conferences.

"The following listing has been prepared to familiarize the public with our members and some of their products. We hope you will find it useful. For more information about the IAAD, contact any Board Member."

IAAD Board Members:
D.A. Brumleve (President)
James C. AllenNathan Potechin
Nevin ShalitChet Walters.

Developer [GEnie Address] **Company Name** and *Products:*

James C. Allen [J.ALLEN27] **FAST Technology** *Turbo 25, TinyTurbo030, Turbo030, TurboRAM*

Albert Baggetta [BAGET] **Bagetta Ware** *Eliemouse Complimentary Coloring Book, The Comic Book Collector, The Mis-Adventures of Eliemouse, Shakespeare: The Sonnets*

David Beckemeyer [D.BECKEMEYER] **Beckemeyer Development Tools** *Hard Disk Sentry, Hard Disk Toolkit, SCSI Tape Kit*

Robert M. Birmingham [R.BIRMINGHA4]

Dorothy A. Brumleve [D.A.BRUMLEVE] **D.A. Brumleve** *Kidpublisher Professional, Super Kidgrid, Kidpainter, Multiplay, Telegram, Creative Discovery Packet, Learning Games Packet*

John Cole, Lee Seiler [J.COLE18, LEXICOR] **Lexicor** *Rosetta, Cyberscult, Prism Paint, Prism Render, Phase 4, Phoenix 512, Leonardo Board*

Phil Comeau [P.COMEAU1] **Wintertree Software Inc.** *The GramSlam Grammar and Style Checker, Grammar Expert, Spelling Sentry*

Brad Cox [BAREFOOT] **Barefoot Software** *SMPTETrack, EditTrack, GenEdit, EZ Score+, Hybriswitch*

Manfred Doewich [CYBERCUBE] **Cybercube Research Ltd.** *CyReL SUNRISE M16-1280 True Color High Resolution Graphics Card, CyReL SERENADE M16-1280 True Color High Resolution Graphics Card, CyReL VidiMix8 Desktop Video Module, CyReL Serial Mouse Manager, CyRel Palette Master*

Paul Dube [P.DUBE] **Elan Software** *Solutions*

John Eidsvoog, Charles Johnson [J.EIDSVOOG1], [CODEHEAD] **CodeHead Technologies** *G+Plus, MultiDesk Deluxe, HotWire, CodeKeys, CodeHead Utilities, Warp 9, Calligrapher, MaxiFile, Lookit & Popit, MIDIMax, MIDI Spy, Avant Vector, MegaPaint, Cherry Fonts, Genus Font Editor, TOS Extension Card*

Robert Engberson [COMPO] **Compo** *That's Write, Write On, C-Font, CompoScript, That's Address, Musicom, PC Speed, AT Speed, AT Speed C16*

Lauren Flanagan-Sellers [WORDFLAIR] **Goldleaf Publishing Inc.** *WordFlair II*

Rick Flashman, Dan Wilga [GRIBNIF] **Gribnif Software** *NeoDesk 3, NeoDesk CLI, STalker 3, STeno, XBoot, CardFile 4, Convector Professional, Arabesque Professional, XBoot III, Crazy Dots 8, Crazy Dots 15*

David Fletcher [DITEK] **Ditek International** *DynaCADD*

George Geczy, David Thompson [JMGSOFT], [D.THOMPSON66] **JMG Software International, Inc.** *HyperLINK*

Tyson T. Gill [T.GILL7] **GT Software** *CardFile* (distr. by Gribnif)

Tom Harker, Doug Wheeler, Hans-Peter Labude [ICDINC], [DOUG.W], [CD.GMBH] **ICD, Inc.** *The Link, AdSCSI Micro ST, AdSCSI ST, AdSCSI Plus ST, AdSpeed ST, AdSpeed STe, FA-ST Hard Drive Kit, FA-ST Tape Backup, Cleanup ST, ICD Professional Hard Drive Utilities, ICD Tape Backup Software, Advantage Micro ST, Advantage ST, Advantage Plus ST, STHA, Personal Pascal*

Doug Harrison [D.S.HARRISON] *Opus* (shareware), *Lookit & Popit* (distr. by CodeHead)

Craig Harvey [C.HARVEY] **Clear Thinking** *EdHak, Metapsychology Primer*

Harlan Hugh [H.HUGH] **Power Thought Software** *INVISION Elite (distr. by DMC)*

John 'Hutch' Hutchinson [FAIR-DINKUM] **Fair Dinkum Technologies** *CrossWord Creator II, Word Search Creator, Cryptographer, InfoDisk, Cyberdrome: The Hoverjet Simulator, Puzzle Pack*

Gene Kane [GENEXRX] **Xerox Corp** *Printer Drivers For Xerox Printers*

Deron Kazmaier [DERON.K] **Soft-Logik Publishing** *PageStream, ImageClub Clip Art, ImageClub Fonts, Business Forms*

Alex Kiernan, David Link, Dave Nutkins [HISOFT] **HiSoft** *Devpac 3, HiSoft BASIC 2, Lattice C, High-Speed Pascal, FTL Modula-2, WERCS, Harlekin 2, HiSoft C, ProFlight, K-Spread, K-Comm, K-Word, K-Data.* (HiSoft products distr. by Oregon Research Associates)

Gregory J. Kopchak [GREG] **It's All Relative** *It's All Relative, BookMaker, Forecaster3, AbbreviatorST, PhotoCD Conversion*

Marshall Lake [MLAKE] **TEAM Software** *A Day at the Races, A Day at the Races Companion, 3 Days at Gettysburg*

Bob Luneski [ORA.TECH] **Oregon Research Associates** *Diamond Back II, Diamond Edge, Knife ST, Ultimate Virus Killer, DevPacST 3, DevPacTT, HiSoft BASIC 2, Lattice C 5.5, HiSoft C, HighSpeed Pascal,* *FTL Modula-2, Tempus 2, WERCS, Harlekin 2, True Paint, ProFlight*

Henry Murphy, Carl Stanford [H.MURPHY], [C.STANFORD] **MS Design** *FontPak 1 & 2, Wheeler Quick Art CD-ROM, Wheeler Quick Art Image Disks*

Tom Nielsen [ESTEEM] **eSTeem, inc.** *eSTeem PILOT*

Mark T. O'Bryan [M.OBRYAN1] **Paradigm Software Products** *Omni-Banker ST*

W. David Parks [W.PARKS3] **Dr. Bobware , Wizworks!** *Scanlite, MVG: MultiViewer Graphica, MVG Modules Disks 1, 2, & 3*

William Penner [BPENNER] **Medical Designs Software** *ECTStat, IOLCALC, MultiWriter, SERIALFX*

Mario Perdue [M.PERDUE] **M.P. Graphics Systems** *Noids-II*

Nathan Potechin [POTECHIN] **DMC Publishing** *Calamus 1.09N, Calamus SL & modules, Calamus Font Editor, The Guide to Calamus Desktop Publishing, Outline Art, INVISION Elite*

Roger Richards [R.RICHARDS2] **Synergy Resources** *GEMvelope!, SynthView DW-8000, Synth View K1*

George Richardson [G.RICHARDSO1] **Merlin Group, Inc.**

Chris Roberts [DRAGONWARE] **DragonWare Software Inc.** *G Man, Satellite Locator ST, Smoke Art, Dragon Battery, Battery.ACC, Omikron Basic, FreeWay, DBRS ST, D__Graph ST*

Eric Rosenquist [E.ROSENQUIST] **Strata Software** *STalker & STeno* (distr. by Gribnif)

Nevin Shalit [NEVIN-S] **Step Ahead Software, Inc.** *TrackerST, Tracker For Windows*

David M Small [DAVESMALL] **Gadgets by Small, Inc.** *Spectre GCR*

Charles Smeton [C.S.SMETON] **NewSTar Technology Management** *The STraight FAX!*

Josh Snyder [J.SNYDER7] **Cali-Co. Superior Software** *Mah-Jong Solitaire*

Gene F. Sothan [EFS] **Sothan Software , IB Computers** *IB Harddisk Backup and Restore, Autosort, Writeboot*

John Trautschold [J.TRAUTSCHOL] **Missionware Software** *lottODDS, Printer Initializer, Flash II*

Melinda Turcsanyi [M.TURCSANYI] **MUSICODE Software**

Clayton Walnum [C.WALNUM1] **Taylor Ridge Books** *C-manship Complete, ST Assembly Language Workshop, GFA Basic Toolkit, VDI Quick Reference, AES Quick Reference, TRB Shareware Companion*

Chet Walters [C.WALTERS1] **WizWorks!** *Image Cat, Mug Shot!, Coalesce Image Merger, Ma Hubbard's Cupboard, Mug Shot Data*

Sterling K. Webb [S.WEBB7] **SKWare One** *Seurat, ColorScan, Auto*Art, PS-2GDOS*

Norm Weinress [N.WEINRESS] **Weinress Consulting** *D.E.K.A.*

Steve Whitney [S.WHITNEY] *G Print*

James D Yegerlehner [J.YEGERLEHNE] **Apprentice Software** *Neural-network Construction Set*

You can use *GE electronic mail* to ask questions directly to any developer. In addition, most of the developers have their own message area (some have several) in which to *post public questions* to them or to other users. In the next issue we will publish the goals of the IAAD and the benefits of membership in its association. Join us then.

ST Aladdin – GEnie Navigator

What, you may ask, does a navigator have to do with an electronic bulletin board like GEnie? Well, if you have ever tried to use a bundle of cryptic commands to find your way through various message and file areas, you would soon be asking for someone to help you "navigate."

ST Aladdin, written by Tim Purves and Gordon Monnier, is now at version 1.50 and is a free download on Page 1000–the ST Aladdin RoundTable. *Aladdin* is a very intuitive program that is quite easy to configure and use with almost any type of modem. Look for more information in future columns from one of the ST Aladdin sysops.

GEnie Sign Up Information

GEnie couldn't be easier to try. No sign up fee. The monthly subscription fee of just $4.95 gives you unlimited non-prime-time usage of GEnie*Basic services. If you are not completely happy with GEnie*Basic services after your first 30 days, we'll refund your initial $4.95 subscription fee! Think of it! One month to enjoy the information, education, entertainment and savings GEnie can offer with a satisfaction guarantee.

To sign up, follow these simple steps:

1. Set your communications software for half duplex (local echo) at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud.
2. Dial toll free: 1–800–638–8369 (in Canada: 1–800–387–8330). Upon connection, enter HHH.
3. At the U#= prompt, enter XTX99437,GENIE and press the [Return] key.

4. Have a major credit card ready. In the U.S. you may also use your checking account number.

For more information in the United States or Canada, call 1–800–638–9639 or write to GEnie, c/o GE Information Services, P.O. Box 6403, Rockville, MD, 20850–1785.

GEnie Rates Dropped

At the time of this writing, GEnie has just dropped its regular rates for non-Basic areas to $12.50 US per hour Prime Time (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Weekdays) and $6.00 US per hour Non-Prime Time (6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Weekdays, Weekends and Holidays). In addition, GEnie Basic*Services and electronic mail are free during non-prime hours. These rates are for connect charges only and do not include long distance or other surcharges.

GEnie ST Libraries by Larry D. Duke,

ST Librarian [LARRY.D]

When I volunteered to write an article for *Current Notes* about the GEnie ST RoundTable Library, I had delusions of composing a listing of exceptional files available for downloading. I captured a *complete list* of files available in the library and immediately realized the enormity of the task. Just to the end of 1992, the *list alone* took up almost 2MB of room on the hard drive. What had I gotten myself into? This is a task that will take a lifetime....

The complete library is over 700MB. There are literally thousands of files from over 2,300 uploaders. The library contains 2,100+ graphics, over 1,100 games, and more than 1,700 utilities. Is it possible to write a comprehensive article on this vast amount of data? We'll see....

Undaunted, I waded through the information. Hours later the data had been sorted, resorted, divided into libraries, and otherwise manipulated in almost every conceivable way. My suspicions had been confirmed. If I quit my job, kiss my wife and kids goodbye, and locked myself in a room, I could write a complete analysis of the library. Of course, by the time I was finished, there would be thousands more files in the library that needed to be done. Needless to say, this and all following articles pertaining to the GEnie ST Library will *not* be comprehensive. What can be done, however, is to list a few of the files that *everybody* should have, and the easiest way of getting them.

In order to bring some sort of order to the listings, we'll start with a quick breakdown of the libraries available:

Library 1–GEnie Help Files Here you will find files uploaded by the SysOps to make your time on GEnie a little easier. These files explain uploading, downloading, and a myriad of other commonly used items in the library and BBS.

Library 2–Utilities The range of utilities is so large, it's hard to explain in one paragraph what comprises this library. TOS fixes, TOS enhancements, Disk Utilities, and more can be found here (this is my favorite library).

Library 3–Language/Programming Source codes for C, Assembly, GFA BASIC, HiSoft BASIC, and more are here, as well as programming tools to make your programs better.

Library 4–Graphic Animation Sequence and other animation files are here. Some exceptional graphics reside here.

Library 5–Graphics and Art Pictures ranging from simple to elaborate, from monochrome to 32,000 colors, from Doodle Art to GIF and PCS files.

Library 6–Business Here we find public domain spreadsheets, word processors, appointment calendars, and more. Whether you run business with the Atari or just want to run your home more efficiently, look here for programs and help.

Library 7–Telecomputing Upload and download protocols, telecommunication software, BBS announcements, and more are here.

Library 8–Games One of the most popular areas in the RoundTable. There is literally something for everybody here.

Library 9–Educational Files to teach yourself or your children numbers, letters, typing, and more. The ST/TT really shines on some of these programs.

Library 10–Demos Before you buy that new program, you can often check out a free demo of it by downloading it from here. There are demos of some exceptional software here, from word processors to games.

Library 11–Music Hundreds of files for Music Studio, Music Construction Set, and other formats. Classical to Jazz to Rock to whatever can be found here.

Library 12–Adult Library Comprised mostly of pictures, you can find nude and seminude male and female pictures in almost every format. GEnie policy does not allow uploading pictures of genitalia or sexual activities, and the pictures uploaded are carefully screened to ensure their appropriateness for release.

Library 13–Atari Archives Looking for some information on an old program? All of the messages gleaned from the BBS portion of the RoundTable are stored here. Some exceptional information is hidden away in these archives.

Library 14–Press Releases Information about upcoming hardware and software, special pricing and availability of goods from commercial developers and retailers. Keep up with what's going on in the Atari world!

Library 15–Newsletters and Reviews Newsletters from User Groups and special interests, as well as software and hardware reviews.

Library 16–OS9/68000 for the ST Remember when you first purchased the computer, somewhere in the documentation there was information about the alternate operating system, OS9? It was meant for business applications, but never quite took off. There are a few limited files in this area that take advantage of this system.

Library 17–Digitized Sounds Some really nice stuff here. Sampled sounds in many formats, including the new DMA sound capabilities of the STe and TT.

Library 18–Desktop Publishing and Clip Art Support for PageStream, Fleet Street, and Publisher ST. Calamus is in Library 30. Some very good clip art resides here as well.

Library 19–CPU STR Newswire Previous versions of STReport.

Library 20–Printer Drivers Printer drivers for most ST Software and most printers available.

Library 21–T.O.S.(The Other Stuff) When a file doesn't fit any other category, it falls in here. There are patch upgrades to numerous programs, icon files for NeoDesk, and more. Check this one out for some neat stuff!

Library 22–GNU, MINT,and PowerDos Alternate operating systems or the ST/TT. Powerful stuff....

Library 24–Emulator Support MAC, 8bit, and DOS emulation files and information.

Library 25–ZNET Previous issues of ZNET Online magazine.

Library 26–FOR SALE/WANTED Some great bargains are available here. The library is cleaned out after 30 days, so the information here is current. Pick up that extra computer or bigger hard drive, or the software to go with it.

Library 27–Hardware Projects Add RAM, fix a hard drive, add a peripheral, or create a whole new system with the information from here. For people who love the smell of solder...

Library 28–Graphic Programs and Utilities Public domain drawing programs and programs to enhance your ability to create/manipulate/display just about every possible picture format.

Library 29–Music Programs and Sound Utilities Players, sound manipulators and more.

Library 30–DMC Publishing Product Support Look for CALAMUS and CALAMUS SL support files, demos, fonts samples and more here.

Library 31–Children's Applications Such a varied array of software here, it's hard to describe. Drop by for a visit in this library.

Library 32–Portfolio Support Support for Atari's palmtop MSDOS computer, Portfolio. This information is duplicated in the PORTFOLIO RoundTable on GEnie.

Library 35–GEnie Lamp The Online Magazine Information about GEnie, the ST RoundTable, and more available here.

Library 38–Atari Explorer ST Format Online magazines and demo programs from one of the most popular ST magazines in Europe.

Library 39–Lexicor Graphics Library You really have to see this to believe what your computer is capable of, graphically speaking. Lexicor has become the standard of excellence in graphics software in the ST area. See what people have created with their programs in this library.

Library 40–Extraction Utilities Find the latest versions of ARC, ZIP, ZOO, LZH and other formats here.

Library 41–DynaCadd Product Support Support for the premier CADD program for not only the Atari market, but for the entire microcomputer industry.

There are other libraries, but they are mostly beta test areas, and the like. What files do you need? To start, you'll need archiving and dearchiving utilities. Here are a list of archiving programs you'll want to extract the compressed files in the library:

[ST_ZIP21.LZH] ST ZIP 2.1 provides exceptional compression techniques with a built in GEM shell.

[ARC_LZH2.TOS] A self extracting archive that contains ARC602ST.TTP, LZH201L, and Charles Johnson's ARCSHELL 3.1. A really nice package. If you get this file, there are only a couple of new ones you'll need to have a complete archiving library (STZIP200 and ZOO 2.1)

[LZH201L.LZH] Often referred to as QUESTOR's LZH, this archiver yields very good compression technique in a relatively standard format. The .TTP file in the archive is compatible with ARCSHELL 3.1.

[ZOO214.LZH] ZOO is very popular with the folks who frequent Usenet, where lots of freeware and shareware comes from. Its use is a bit on the cryptic side, but is needed for any of the .ZOO files in the library.

[ARC602ST.ARC] The "old standard" of archivers, ARC provides a good compression algorithm with easy use. This is a very good archiving program that as fallen from its leadership post in recent times, with the advent of LZH (the current frontrunner). Compatible with ARCSHELL.

[ARCSHL31.ARC] ARC Shell–Charles Johnson's outstanding GEM shell to make your archiving programs work much easier. No need to remember command line switches; this makes it a mouse click away...

In upcoming articles, we'll look at many of the other files available in the GEnie ST Libraries. We'll take a look at uploading, downloading, GEnie policy on allowable files, and more.

Thanks Larry. See you next issue!

Developer Spotlight – W.D.Parks

Since becoming a GEnie user, I have been very impressed with the many interesting characters I have met. One of the most interesting and entertaining is W.D. Parks [W.PARKS3], known to his friends as "the Doc" as in Dr. Bobware. We had the pleasure of meeting at the Toronto show in April 1992–ACE '92. Since then, Doc and I have spent many hours chatting at the real time conferences, but that is another story. I asked

Doc to tell us about his earlier days in computing and his eventual involvement with Atari products:

My first computer was a Jack Tramiel computer called the VIC20. I had built a homebrew computer from Popular Electronics but just couldn't understand what was going on, so I decided to buy one and see what in blazes a program actually was. Sleep became only a rumour, a memory I once had. I finally grasped the whole concept of language and how a computer related to it and felt quite elated by it all. I felt as though I'd met myself from the opposite end of the picture. Now I understood the electronics and the software concept. Zowie! I've never been the same since.

(Doc worked for some time as a salesman and began writing retail applications for the store where he worked. It carried IBM and, eventually, Amiga computers but Doc was not too impressed with any of them in his search for a new computer.)

I chanced to meet a few ST users and finally went to one of their group's meetings and was quite impressed with the ST. I bought one. This was what? 1988, I think. I bought it with the full intention of writing software for it. Perhaps a few doodads here and there but mainly a database, somewhat akin to the POS (Point of Sale) system I'd done on the PC.

I'd wanted to explore the graphics a little bit first. You gotta play a little bit with a new machine, ya know. And I came up with some graphic loaders that I thought were pretty slick and wrapped them up into a small package and sent it to Chet Walters (at WizWorks!). He uploaded it to GEnie and suddenly I forgot all about the database stuff... MultiViewerGraphica was born. GEnie was kind enough to let me keep an MVG topic there and I've been carousing on GEnie ever since.

A look into Dr. Bob's work place: 1 MegaST4, mono monitor, Syquest 44, scads and scads of diskettes, clutter of all imaginable forms. This is my main work computer. 1 520ST, external drive, no monitor, scads and scads of diskettes, clutter of all imaginable forms. 1 286–10 AT system, SVGA, multisync monitor, scads and scads of 5 1/4 diskettes and, of course, clutter of all imaginable sorts. 1 386–33 AT system, VGA, VGA greyscale monitor, scads and scads...

Over on the far side of the room is our "old programmers museum" where you'll find such delights as an original TRS80 model 1 with 48k of ram, a CBM–8032 (32k ram!) dual 500k disk drive, a few 2031's, a model 100 clone, and various other paraphernalia that becomes a gadget freak.

See why Doc is such an interesting guy?

User Spotlight–Joe Meehan

Our first user spotlight falls on Joe Meehan who is one of the most helpful users on GEnie. Joe can be found in several different RT's and seems to have a boundless wealth of information on many topics. Although Joe may not be the "typical" user, he certainly epitomizes the camaraderie in the ST RoundTable. Joe, tell us a little bit about yourself:

I guess I can start by saying I am a life long resident of Columbus, Ohio, born in 1947. I was lucky to have parents who encouraged me to complete my education and I completed by BA in Economics after nine years (I never said I was fast ‹grin›), while supporting myself after my father died. I have since gone back and completed a number of other courses, mostly in the sciences.

My first connection with computers was an Atari XL400 I got my son. It seemed to be the "most bang for the dollar." I never did learn to use it, but my son did. He is in the honors program at Ohio State University, along with his sister. He is in engineering; his sister is still undecided.

My first computer was a 520 I got at a grand opening sale. I had brought a friend to get one for her business and I decided to get one for myself. My friend now tracks over 65,000 customers on her ST and it has outlived several other makes. About this time I found my local user group and with it a great deal of support as well as a number of new friends.

Over the years my system has grown. I upgraded to one meg of memory (who would ever need more ‹grin›), then to a Mega 2, and now I have a TT with 8 megs RAM and about 500 meg of hard drive. I have a PCT1426 color TT monitor, a TTM194 Hi-Res TT monitor, a DeskJet Plus (now at work) and a HP IIIp laser printer. My daughter is using my original ST, mono monitor, and Atari printer at school. I would say two of the best accessories I have had for my computer have been my user group and GEnie.

Today I generally use my computer for DTP (*Calamus*, I came up from TimeWorks) and Word Processing (*WordPerfect*) as well as accessing GEnie. My computer is used for work, business and play. On GEnie I attend the Aladdin ST, Food & Wine, Religion, WordPerfect, ICD, Pets, Atari ST, Enable, Automotive, Motorcycle, Portfolio, Photo, Home Office & Business and Genealogy RoundTables. I also do beta testing for some of the better known Atari programs and generally enjoy myself at all the Atari events I can schedule.

My experience with the Atari has not been lost in my professional life either. I work for the Ohio Department of Taxation and, until recently, I was an Audit Unit Supervisor. My superiors found that when they had a problem they could not solve involving computers, they could call on me and I could take the problem home with me and generally come up with a solution.

The DTP was especially impressive; they could not reproduce what I did, using any of their DOS or MAC equipment. They also could never figure out how I found my information (which I got from GEnie).

Thanks to Joe Meehan for sharing this information with us. Who will be in the User Spotlight next issue? It could be you! Join us then.

Woods Music

by
Gary Woods

Introduction
and
General MIDI

Hi, my name is Gary Woods and I'm going to be writing a MIDI column for *Current Notes.* For about the past 9 months Joe Waters has been harassing me unmercifully to write something in his fine publication about Music and MIDI for the Atari. Okay, okay..., the truth is I told Joe I'd stand outside his house and hold my breath until I turned blue if he didn't let me write something. There, I've said it and I'm glad.

A Little About Me

To give you a little background on myself, I'm a professional musician working in the Los Angeles area. For the past six years I've written a Technical Column for the Society of "Composers and Lyricists." The group is made up of people who write motion picture and television music, and the publication they put out, called *The Score,* won the Deems Taylor Award issued by ASCAP, and is highly thought of in the entertainment industry. I am also on the Board of Directors of the group along with such people as Henry Mancini, Bill Conti, Lalo Schifrin, and Quincy Jones.

In some of the previous issues of the *Score,* I have written about such topics as, the *Cue,* and *Auricle,* film music synchronizing software. Roland's *Intelligent Arranger,* and Lone Wolf's *MIDI Tap,* product line. Also, I conducted an interview with Hans Zimmer while he was scoring "Radio Flyer," and followed it by interviewing three of the better known recordists of film music, Armin Steiner (20th Century Fox,) Bobby Fernandez (Warner Brothers,) and Angel Balestier (Group 4.)

On the professional side, I've worked with such entertainers as Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Gladys Knight, Jim Nabors, Charo, and Florence Henderson. I started in television in the early 70's with such shows as "Mod Squad," and "Night Galleries." Later in the 80's, I worked on "Love Boat," and such miniseries as "The Winds of War," and "Shogun."

Currently, I'm doing what is called pre-production work on a motion picture called "Hoops." Pre-production, in this case, involves putting together a soundtrack album and preparing the music that will be needed for the project before filming takes place.

For about the last five years, every project I've been involved with has included the use of my Atari Computer in some way. From preparing demonstration tapes, to creating the sheet music which other musicians use to perform, to actually recording the music which is used in the production, the Atari has been there the whole way. For about the past year I've been using an STe with 4 Meg of RAM, 2 monitors, 1 Color, 1 Monochrome, 2 Hard Drives, a 60 MB Supra, and a Syquest which functions as a backup for all my data. Also, I keep a spare 4 Meg STe, and a Monochrome Monitor in the closet if I go to another studio.

I've used Doctor T's products for years including their *Omega* Sequencing Package, *The Copyist,* for music preparation, and *DX Heaven* for librarying sounds. Recently, I switched to a program called *Cubase,* which combines all these functions into one neat package. In fact, I liked the software so much I harangued them into being a Beta-Tester for them.

Besides being a Beta-Tester for *Cubase,* I started writing for the "Club Cubase Newsletter," which is a publication for their users group. One of the first articles I wrote for it concerned how I use *Cubase,* in preparing the music for the picture "Hoops," that I mentioned earlier. Being a diligent recycler it will end up in these pages at a later date.

Like most of you, I'm at least a little worried about whether our favorite platform is going to be around for much longer. If Atari is going to survive I believe it is going to be on the three pillars of Desktop Publishing, Music, and our old friend Games. My fondest desire is that I can get enough of you turned on about music, that you'll go out and tell your friends and they'll drop everything and purchase new Atari computers so I can go on having a great time with mine.

My Plan for 1993

My battle plan to accomplish this goal is a 3-pronged approach.

1. I'm going to talk about what MIDI is, and how you can use it to have some fun. Those two sockets on the side of your computer must have been put there for a reason; let's find out what it is.

2. How do I go about setting up a MIDI studio? What are the component parts, how much does it cost, etc.? Such topics as what is a sequencer or a librarian? What are the types of synthesizers available, and how

can I use them? What about playback equipment? Can I use my home stereo, or do I need a mixer, and a special amplifier? We'll get to all these topics.

3. Reviews of both software and hardware. Software such as Steinberg's *Cubase*, Dr. T's *Omega KCS*, and *X-OR*. John Eidsvoog's *MIDI Spy* and C-Lab's *Notator*, and hardware, like keyboards, synth modules, mixers, and recording equipment.

General MIDI

The first topic I'm going to speak about briefly is something called General MIDI. This is a standard that has been created by instrument manufacturers to give some degree of uniformity to their products. It may surprise you, that the large instrument manufacturers like Roland and Yamaha have decided that the professional musician market is too small for their grand designs, and so increasingly they have come out with products specifically pointed at the home enthusiasts. Toward that end they have come up with a specification which they call General MIDI.

What this means, is that on General MIDI equipped instruments all the presets are arranged in the same order. For example, all the electric basses are on a certain number, and all the trumpets are on a certain number. (See figure 1)

Also, other parameters such as volume, panning, pitch bend, reverberation, and modulation wheels all have numbers that are identical to one other. It's staggering to think there is finally some kind of uniformity anywhere in the computer world, but at least for now the musical instrument manufacturers seem to have come together.

On a basic level, this means that you can purchase, on a disk, already orchestrated songs, which can be played back on your own General MIDI system, and the good news for us, is that music created this way for the IBM PC's can be played back on our beloved Ataris. Once you've got this music playing on your system, you can interact with it by playing along on a keyboard, adding parts, or changing the arrangement to comply with your tastes.

To expand this one level farther, you could string several of these pieces of music together to accompany your own videos, or slides of your vacation. I have also seen this kind of setup used as a marketing tool for business or for presentations at seminars. Even a simple setup could really enhance the look and feel of a demonstration.

1. Piano 1
2. Piano 2
3. Pinao 3
4. Honky–tonk
5. E.Piano 1
6. E.Piano 2
7. Harpsichord
8. Clav.
9. Celesta
10. Glockenspiel
11. Music Box
12. Vibraphone
13. Marimba
14. Xylophone
15. Tubular–bell
16. Santur
17. Organ 1
18. Organ 2
19. Organ 3
20. Church Org. 1
21. Reed Organ
22. Accordion Fr.
23. Harmonica
24. Bandneon
25. Nylon–str. Gt.
26. Steel–str. Gt.
27. Jazz Gt.
28. Clean Gt.
29. Muted Gt.
30. Overdrive Gt.
31. Distortion Gt.
32. Gt. Harmonics
33. Accoustic Bs.
34. Fingered Bs.
35. Picked Bs.
36. Fretless Bs.
37. Slap Bass 1
38. Slap Bass 2
39. Synth Bass 1
40. Synth Bass 2
41. Violin
42. Viola
43. Cello
44. Contrabass
45. Tremolo Str.
46. Pizzicato Str.
47. Harp
48. Timpani
49. Strings
50. Slow Strings
51. Syn. Strings 1
52. Syn. Strings 2
53. Choir Aahs
54. Voice Oohs
55. Syn. Vox
56. Orchestra Hit
57. Trumpet
58. Trombone
59. Tuba
60. Muted Trumpet
61. French Horn
62. Brass 1
63. Synth Brass 1
64. Synth Brass 2
65. Soprano Sax
66. Alto Sax
67. Tenor Sax
68. Baritone Sax
69. Oboe
70. English Horn
71. Bassoon
72. Clarinet
73. Piccolo
74. Flute
75. Recorder
76. Pan Flute
77. Bottle Blow
78. Shakuhachi
79. Whistle
80. Ocarina
81. Square Wave
82. Saw Wave
83. Syn. Calliope
84. Chiffer Lead
85. Charang
86. Solo Vox
87. 5th Saw Wave
88. Bass & Lead
89. Fantasia
90. Warm Pad
91. Polysynth
92. Space Voice
93. Bowed Glass
94. Metal Pad
95. Halo Pad
96. Sweep Pad
97. Ice Rain
98. Soundtrack
99. Crystal
100.Atmosphere
101.Brightness
102. Goblin
103.Echo Drops
104. Star Theme
105.Sitar
106.Banjo
107.Shamisen
108.Koto
109.Kalimba
110.Bag Pipe
111.Fiddle
112. Shanai
113.Tinkle Bell
114. Agogo
115.Steel Drums
116.Woodblock
117.Taiko
118.Melo. Tom 1
119.Synth Drum
120.Reverse Cym.
121.Gt. Fret noise
122. Breath Noise
123.Seashore
124. Bird
125.Telephone 1
126.Helicpoter
127.Applause
128.Gun Shot

Figure 1. Order of musical instrument presets in General MIDI specification.

One company that has been very aggressive in this field has been RolandCorp US. They have created several products that use the General MIDI standard, and one, in particular, that is ideal for the home enthusiast. The class of products are called the GS Sound Modules, and the model number for the one I think ideal for home use is CM-300. (See fig. 2) The unit has 128 different instruments, and can play as many as 8 different instruments simultaneously. Also, in addition to the 128 instruments, there are over 30 percussion instruments to give you the possibility of creating anything from orchestral music, to gospel, to reggae, to the latest hip hop sounds. All this in a package that is about 8" long, 2" high, and 6" deep, and retailing for $695. For those of you who haven't

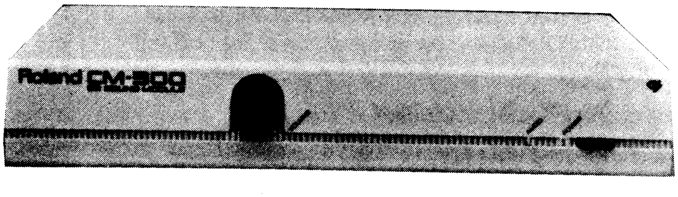


Figure 2. CM–300 GS Sound Module

shopped for musical instruments before, traditionally Roland instruments are discounted heavily in the marketplace, so you can probably get this device for considerably less.

Now I can hear you saying, "I don't play a musical instrument." For you, Roland has come up with something called the Pitch to MIDI Converter. (See fig. 3) The model number is the CP-40, and with this device you can sing into the microphone that comes with it and your voice is converted into MIDI notes, which can be recorded by the computer. This means that you can hum or improvise a melody and hear it coming out as a trombone or whatever sound you select. Even subtle dynamics can be sensed and passed on to the module. For a retail price of $295, this could be a wonderful starting point for you and your computer to interface musically.

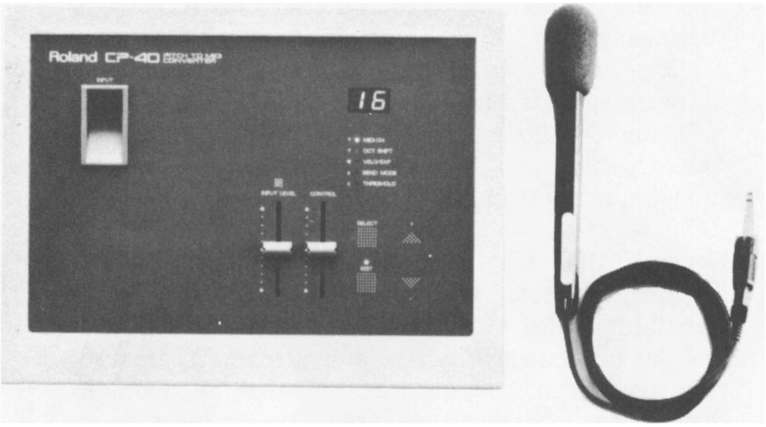


Figure 3. CP—40 Pitch to MIDI Converter

Well, there you have it, our first sojourn into the world of MIDI. The most important element in this column is going to be you. I really need to hear from you as to where you want the column to go. No question will be considered too basic, or too complex. Occasionally I may have to leave you to engage in some project or another, but I will make every effort to keep this going as long as you have an interest in it. You can contact me by writing, calling or faxing:

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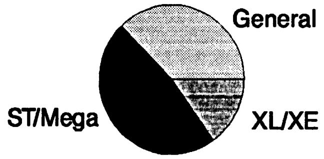

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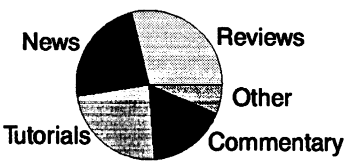

Here is a partial index for *Current Notes* for 1992. Not listed are the Letters to the Editor and the Atari Industry News and Announcements. Sections are provided for News, Commentary, Tutorials, and Product Reviews. Within sections, articles are listed alphabetically by title and include the author and the month and page number. Articles by the major CN columnists are listed separately and not included in the other major sections. Thus, some tutorials and reviews, as well as commentary, can be found under the column listings.

For their $27 subscription fee, CN subscribers received 832 pages of Atari information last year. Articles in 1992 totaled over 570 pages (this excludes advertisements and other administrative pages like the table of contents and cover.) Product reviews accounted for 29% of the articles. Tutorials and News Features were 24% each. Commentary and opinion pieces accounted for 18% The remainder were primarily Letters to the Editor. On coverage, 15% of the articles were aimed at the 8-bit user and 48% at the ST/Mega user. The remaining 37% were of general interest, not directed specifically at the 8-bit or ST owner.

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Populous II: Secrets (of the Gods) Revealed; Boyd (Oct, p.62)
Populous II: Trials of the Olympian Gods; Heininger (Jun, p.52)
Publisher 2 ST: A Dissenting Opinion; Waters (Apr, p.50)
R.B.I. Baseball 2: Baseball from the U.K.; Hulseman (Mar, p.52)
SST: The Gadgets by Small Accelerator; Estler (Jul, p.36)
STrabble: A Faithful ST Version of Scrabble; Wright (Feb, p.52)
STraightFAX! Update: FAX Straight into Your Computer; Sommers (Oct, p.54)
Sozobon C V1.33i: Public Domain C Compiler; Miller (Jul, p.72)
Stalk the Market: Hunting for Goodies on Wall Street; Godbey (Jul, p.54)
TLC Utilities: Attr, Book, Fixr, Form, Namr, Play, Show; Miller (Feb, p.68)
TOS Extension Card: A New Computer in Your Cabinet; Mariano (Apr, p.29)
The Assembly Language Workshop, Vol. 1; Beard (Apr, p.62)
The Blues Brothers: Excellent Platform Arcade Game; Wright (Apr, p.70)
The MINIX Operating System: Unix for the ST!; Marable (Jun, p.64)
The Recipe Box!: Straightforward Recipe Program; Elmore (Nov, p.58)
The Ultimate Virus Killer; Van Wyck (Jul, p.68)
Timeworks Publisher 2: Upgrade of Pub ST; Creighton (Mar, p.60)
Turner's Third Book of Atari ST Topics; St. Martin (Feb, p.66)
William Shakespeare, 1564-1616: The Sonnets; Moes (Oct, p.56)
Word Games: *Crossword Creator* and *Word Search Puzzle*; Ledbetter (Jun, p.72)
XBoot-The Boot Manager: Effective Program; Van Wyck (Apr, p.60)
eSTeem PILOT: A Computer Language for Educators; Moes (Feb, p.46)

Tutorials (8-Bit):

8-Bit Model Railroading; McAllister (Dec, p.41)
A 3 1/2" Disk Drive for Atari 8-Bit Computers; Cole (Nov, p.46)
An Atari 8-Bit Wedding: Making invitations; Hall (Feb, p.56)
Atari 1050: Build Your Own Disk Drive Cooling Fan; Barnes (May, p.52)
Backing Up Your 8-Bit HD: Picking Up Where the Pussycat Left Off; Sandgren (Jul, p.46)
Building a Hard Drive for the Atari XL/XE; Dewell (May, p.54)
Constructing an 8-bit Hard Drive; Cole (May, p.56)
X Fun with Cursors: Redesign Your Cursor in Any Shape or Color; Hall (Apr, p.58)
Making Batch Files Work for You: Getting the Most From Your 8-Bit; Sandgren (Oct, p.48)
PRODBID: The Video and Film Production Planner, SynCalc Template; Summitt (Sep, p.48)
Solving the SpartaDOS X Incompatibility Hassle: Add On/Off Switch; Cole (Jun, p.48)
The International Atari Network: Connecting Atari 8-Bits Worldwide; Harris (Dec, p.44)
Using Atari 8-Bits in the Educational Environment; Baggetta (Oct, p.50)

Tutorials (ST/Mega):

Converting *Word Perfect* Files; Miller (Dec, p.70)
Daisy Change Your Disk Drives-Automatically; Kwak (May, p.68)
MiNT: MiNT is Not TOS; Weiner (May, p.72)
Networking Your STs; Barnes (Dec, p.52)
Planning to Avoid Computer Insecurity, 1; Barnes (Feb, p.42)
Part 2: Backup Hardware; Barnes (Mar, p.42)
Part 3: Backup Software; Barnes (Apr, p.42)
TOS and DOS: Co-Existence at Last!; Wolf (Sep, p.56)
Tricks and Treats for *WordPerfect* Lovers; Laughland (Feb, p.58)
Using *QuickCIS* to Get the Most from CompuServe; Ledbetter (Nov, p.60)
Which DOS Emulation? An ST User Explores DOS Options; Heininger (Mar, p.26)
Writing an Accessory Program: Doing It the Hard Way; Kitchens (May, p.50)

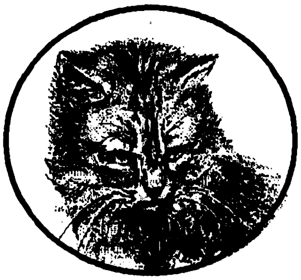
Tutorials (General):

FIDONET: Communications Among 13,000 BBSs Nationwide; Leser (Jun, p.74)
The Atari Archive at the University of Michigan; Weiner (Mar, p.50)
Unconventional Use of Your Modem; Turner (May, p.48)

The Junkyard Pussycat

by J. D. Barnes

Computers As Commodities



The Pussycat, like many other old computer gaffers, often views the first computer he used with nostalgia. In the Pussycat's case this was an IBM 7090 of about 1962 vintage. The machine and its supporting elements occupied an entire (rather small) building on the College Park campus of the University of Maryland. Nearly everything else in the building had an IBM label on it as well. The cards were punched on IBM keypunch machines. The card decks were listed out on IBM tabulating machines. The last 8 columns of the card were punched in numerical sequence so that they could be put through an IBM sorter to reorder the decks after they were dropped.

These machines represented *high tech* at the time. Researchers were glad to have them so that they and their graduate students could toil away the nights solving the most challenging scientific problems of the day. And Big Blue was everywhere.

The Fate of the Dinosaurs?

Not being a big follower of the stock market, the Pussycat was recently surprised to learn that IBM stock has lost something like 60 percent of its value within the past couple of years. Downsizing has already cost tens of thousands of jobs with more to come.

IBM is not the only one of the giants that has suffered brutally in recent times. Digital Equipment Corp, Unisys (the remnants of the makers of the once-proud Univac line), Control Data, Cray Research, all of the makers of large computers, are struggling mightily. Are those who brought us the computing leviathans of the past doomed to share the fate of the dinosaurs?

One can read the tables in Forbes Magazine's performance yardsticks on 1247 American companies to indicate that this is, indeed, the case.

The Rise of the Commodity Computer

The companies that lead the pack in Forbes' yardsticks, which focus on return on equity and on profitability, are all manufacturers of desktop computers—outfits like Dell, Apple, Compac, and AST research.

In the 1980s, manufacturers like Intel and Motorola began producing Central Processing Unit (CPU) chips that had much of the raw computational speed and power of mainframes.

The monster disk storage arrays of the mainframes soon shrunk to the size of shoeboxes as techniques for reading and writing magnetic media improved. Modern tape drives use cartridges only slightly larger than matchboxes to store what formerly took a shelf of 12 inch reels of tape. The refrigerator-sized tape drives of yesteryear are now the size of normal hard drive units.

These advances in technology allowed people to put most of the computing power that they needed on their desktops. The products are now sold in the same way as other appliances—through mass merchandisers and deep discounters.

Evolving technology makes this industry look like the auto industry of a few years ago. There are only a couple kinds of engines. A few gear ratios in the transmissions let the user choose his cruising speed. There are models for sporty use, for hauling the whole family, and for 18-wheeler carrying capacity. The rest of the differences are a matter of color and style.

Computers are now simple commodity merchandise—mass produced and mass-marketed to a fashion-conscious public.

The Computer Appliance?

Now that computers are everywhere, what kind of status do they enjoy?

Are they fad appliances like food processors or pasta makers? Fun for a while but soon exiled to closets once it becomes clear how tedious it is to use them. Or are they necessary appliances like refrigerators, washers, and dryers?

Is a computer a necessity like an automobile, a telephone, or a television set? Do computers transport us to and from school and work? Are they badges of membership in modern society?

Are they toys, something to play with, a source of amusement and entertainment? Are computers tools like the garden hose or the screwdriver? Are they needed to keep the household in good repair or to enhance it?

Computers in households play many of these roles; in some households they play multiple roles. Office machines in the guise of household computers are likely to be with us for a long time to come.

Computers have not yet reached the status of telephones, refrigerators, automobiles, television sets, or any of the other paraphernalia that we associate with a minimum standard of comfort in modern living. There is, however, real potential for them to play much wider roles.

Glimpses of the Future

Kodak's recent announcement of Photo CD technology has excited at least one of the Pussycat's techie friends. The local upscale photo stores have been demonstrating the technology and computer manufacturers are rushing to adapt it to their systems. How long will it be before people share vacation slides with one another on television screens?

Electronic filing of tax returns is now available for a (slightly exorbitant) fee. Will this someday become the preferred way to do things? Will the IRS's computers ever become powerful enough to finally track down the hundreds of billions of dollars thought to be in the hands of tax cheats?

The online services have been working to connect people and ideas for many years now. Will they ever become a factor in the lives of more than a handful of people? In principle, I can already exchange electronic mail with my sister via Compuserve. Will I ever find it truly desirable to do so?

How long will it be before the phone companies (or maybe the cable TV operators) start sending customized diets of TV fare into our homes? Will our household computers play a role in this?

The FAX business is evolving rapidly. Send/receive modems with accompanying software now cost less than the moronic modems of yesteryear and the phone companies are starting to provide FAX mailboxes that eliminate the need for a dedicated phone line or FAX switcher.

If household computing is to remain a growth industry it needs to expand beyond a mere extension of the office or the classroom to actually touch the lives of the users to enrich them in new, perhaps unexpected, ways.

Some of this is already happening within the Pussycat's own family. My cousins bought my 76-year-old uncle a Macintosh for his birthday a couple of years ago. Now he is getting a big kick out of following his stock portfolio with Prodigy and a spreadsheet. My sister now tracks my 75-year-old mother's checkbook along with her own family's financial affairs. A computerized household inventory is the next project.

Even a rather reclusive acquaintance of my wife's seems to spend a lot of time at the keyboard of her Mac, which serves as a major link to the outside world with shopping and financial services available on Prodigy.

On the other hand, those who have expected some sort of a "computer revolution" that would alter our lives have learned to temper their prognostications for a much more distant future.

The Race Is to the Swift

In the early days of computing the field belonged to those who could amass enough financial muscle to carry out the research and development required to build giant computers and tame their instruction sets with operating system software. The applications were largely cobbled together by scientists and engineers to solve their own problems.

Making the most of one's opportunities in today's marketplace is more a matter of brainpower rather than financial might. Those who are swift enough to develop software that sells or hardware that outperforms its competitors are doing very nicely indeed.

The shakeouts that have attended the emergence of computers as commodity merchandise have defined the playing field for software developers.

The number of platforms is limited and the rules of the game are well established, out in the open for everyone to see. Software developers can get all of the tools they need on a CD-ROM at a cost equivalent to a couple of days' labor. Open standards for connecting peripheral devices (SCSI is perhaps the most notable example) are well established while proprietary schemes designed to link the end user to a single vendor seem to be falling by the wayside.

Commodity Software

The big successes on the software side seem to be accruing to companies that started out as nimble enterprises cooked up by whiz kids like Bill Gates. By reinvesting the fruits of their success in acquisitions and hiring cadres of similarly irrepressible techies, Microsoft and Lotus Development have industrialized the process of software development and distribution to the point where applications can be bought as easily as coffee beans.

Computing has been brought to the masses because tasks that were inaccessible on mainframes became duck soup on the desktop. Word processing, typesetting, and spreadsheet software were the enabling technologies that made it rational to put one of the new microcomputers onto everyone's office desktop.

The move into the schools was next and soon no right-thinking parent could afford to be without a computer at home.

"Computer Literacy" became a catch phrase as millions felt that this mysterious new technology was something that everyone had to comprehend on its own terms. As more and more boxes moved out of the mass merchandising outlets onto home and office desktops much of that mystique disappeared.

The engineers and mechanics who fashion personal computers and their software have learned what it takes to make them simple to set up and use, especially for twelve year olds.

A Mature Computer Society

The Pussycat reads the layoffs arising out of the need to adapt huge entities like IBM to the realities of an evolving marketplace as a sure sign that computer technology has matured to the point where it is just another fixture in society.

Some companies will disappear because their products and ideas did not gain acceptance in the marketplace. Successful companies will need to consolidate and make cosmetic changes to reach out into as yet untapped market niches.

In the Pussycat's view, future generations will see the 1980s and the early 1990s as marking the passing of the frontier in the introduction of computers.

The challenge for those who want to see progress will be to take the new tools in hand to create a better place for humans to inhabit. The Pussycat sees the biggest challenge to be in the area of information and communications. We desperately need better ways to filter the data that is available to us and organize it to support better decision-making. Will the emerging multi-media capabilities finally bring this about? Will we be able to tap the entire storehouse of human knowledge from our desktops?

If the 1890s marked the passing of the frontier in America's march toward its Manifest Destiny, how will the citizens of the 2090s look back on our era? That is something to ponder as we head into another year.

CURRENT NOTES ST LIBRARY

July/August 1992

700: SpiritWare's Bible Concordance, Part 1 (SS)
701d: SpiritWare's Bible Concordance, Part 2
702d: Calligrapher Demo
703d: Elimouse Complimentary Coloring Book(C)
704d: ST Writer Elite V4.8 (Works with SST and TEC board.)
705d: Calamus Winners from the Calamus Creativity and Design Contest
706d: Utilities (DiskSave (recover disk with bad sectors), Finder V12 (automatically locates whatever files a prg is looking for), JClabel V3 (mailing label manager), OnTime V2.2 (set system date/time, viel calendar, select background fill), Tool V1.9 (listing/editing FAT, Hex dump, etc), Worm (puts read only flag on files), FontKill (Type One Font Killer by David Troy.)
707d: Warp 9 32 pictures, Fonts, CherryHi, MovePics (randomn W9 background pics).
708d: Demos (Inventory Pro V6.1 and Payroll Expert)
709d: Game Demos (Populous II, Conquer, Knightmare, Penguin)(C)
710: RPG Games (Quest, Pacific Island, Robin Hood)
711d: Arcade Games (Hurry!, Marbleous, Cops'n'Robbers, Sno–fite)(C)
712d: Triplink! FEDBBS (Latest release from SoniC! Software.)
713d: Transcendence BBS Demo, Part 1
714d: Transcendence BBS Demo, Part 2
715d: ST Keep BBS (up to 32000 users.)
716d: Telecom: BBS online games (Assassin, Galactic Empire), Ghost Writer (desk acc uploads any text file), Joute (play shareware combat game over modem), Rufus (terminal program.)
717d: Utilities (1st Spooler (print spoolder desk acc), BootTyme II (waits for HD to spin up), Bubble (help locate mouse), ChangesZ (more storage on floppy), Company (desk acc disk formatter, clock, etc), CapsLock Status, Dots Screen Saver, EDM Shell 2.24 (archive shell prg), Find–All (searches group of files for specific string), Look ST V1.6 (view text files on screen), Multi–Depacker V1.0, Pool Fix92 (fixes all known bugs in Poolfix), TimeCard V1.01 (desk acc that keeps track of time spent on computer.)
718d: Ideal_List Incredible text file print utility. (German)
719d: Utilities: Archive Shell, Binary Editor, HD Information V1.7, James the Desktop Butler, LZH V201K, Protect6 (guard against virus), Request V1.09 (GEM shell for Quester LH5 series archiver), Re–Boot2 (delays bootup process for HD), Serial FIX (fix problems in ST/TT modem port), Tree View (desk acc displays file org of your disks.)
720d: Monochrome Word Fun: Search Me (word search puzzle generator), ABC Jumble (educational game), Jumble (puzzle word unscrambler), ZeST Keno, Mumbo Jumbo (word game.)
721d: Demos: Silhouette V1.37, G__Man V3.0, UK Virus Killer)
722d: Quotes and Names
723d: Utilities: Strip Formatter, Calendar V6.2, Memory (fool computer into thinking it has less RAM than it does), Screen Saver (color or mono pic in floating balloon), ZeST Le Menu (med res prg that runs other programs.)
724d: Font GDOS, Part 1
725d: Font GDOS, Part 2
726: MiNT Windowing Systems for MiNT (SS)
727d: MiNT Utilities, Part 1
728d: MiNT Utilities, Part 2
729d: MiNT Shells

September 1992

730: ORCS Otto's Resource Construction Set (SS)
731d: Cyber Animations (Gunship, Lamp, Vidibat) (C)
732: Roland MT- 32 Music Studio Demo for Roland MT–32
733: dbWRITER word processor (M)
734d: dbWRITER Dictionary and Thesaurus (M)
735d: Telecom FreeZe Dried Software Terminal V2.20 and ANSITerm
736d: Games (Moonlord ST, Munchie V1.0, Drachen) (C)
737d: Arena Earth game (C)
738d: That's Write Fonts #1
739d: That's Write Fonts #2

October 1992

740d: HyperLINK Runtime Package
741d: HyperLINK Applications #1 (Bbal, Coinbook, Inv, Msg–Adr, Menu, Planets, Racer, Repair, Sharwr13)
742d: HyperLINK Applications #2 (Softwr11, Stat20, Wheels20, Wines)
743: VanTerm V4.0 (Terminal program)
744d: Sozobon C V2.0
745d: MJC/GNU C Mark Johnson C and Complete GNU C Binaries
746d: Sound Merlin V1.0 (sample, sequence, and drum–kit editor)
747d: CompuServe Disk (QuickCIS and other CIS utilities)
748d: DigiStuff! (package of digitized sound utilities)
749d: Pure Pascal Demo
750d: Games (Ozone, Tuzzle, Spider, Tanx, TV Adv) (C)
751d: Power DOS + (Power DOS, GoGo ST V5.0, JumpStart V2.7, TeraDesk)
752d: Demos (STyle and Data Diet)

November 1992

753: Cookbooks: The Recipe Box! is a database dedicated to the storage, retrieval, and printing of recipes. (C/M). **WineMaker**: This is a wine making data base, containing several recipies and other info needed for the production of wine. (M)
754d: Demos: **Mah-Jong** Solitaire V3.0 Demo from Cali–Co Software and **Mailing Manager ST Demo**, the ultimate mailing list program for your Atari ST/TT.
755d/756d: Calamus SL Demo. Save–disabled demo version of Calamus SL includes 8 modules: Frame, Line, Raster, Page, System, Text, Text Style and the Document Converter module and 5 import modules; CVG, CRG, GIF and IMG so that you can import pictures and CTX for text.
757d: CyberDrome Demo. CyberDrome–The HoverJet Simulator, combines the realism of a real–time flight simulator with arcade action and problem solving and explora

tion of an adventure game. Single player or a unique 2-player/2-computer mode. Req. 1 Mb (C)

758d/759d: Invision Elite Demo. New demo version of INVISION Elite, the ultimate black and white imaging package, includes HP Deskjet and LaserJet support. Sample pictures are on disk 759d. (M)

760d: Wrotniak '92 Updates: Another yearly update of **Star 2000**, a freeware subset of Star Base (v.1.21), This is a database of stars, deep sky objects and planets, with extensive mapping capabilities. **Sub_Cal**, a freeware subset of the commercial program El_Cal (v.2.21). In addition to being an expression-parsing calculator, Sub_Cal computes integrals and derivatives, solves linear, non-linear and differential equation systems, plots functions and statistical data, fits curves (to any shape) and distributions, finds extrema of multi-parameter functions, converts units and MUCH more.

761d: Adventure Game Toolkit V1.3. Adventure Game Toolkit v1.3-Allows you to create text adventure games or compile and/or run the multitude of available quality AGT sources and executable games.

762: Arcade Games. **Chateau Santa**-arcade game/great graphics/race through the Chateau to find the Christmas tree before you run out of time. **Spirits**-Help ghosts escape from great danger. **Concentration** with at twist: instead of matching visual symbols, you match beeps and boops of sound. (C)

763d: Clip Art: 55 assorted high res IMG files for use in DTP. (People, Church, Houses, Animals, Adventure Scenes, Alphabet.)

764d: SEDT Editors. GSEDT and TSEDT are an implementation of DEC's EDT editor for the Atari ST. GSEDT makes good use of the ST's GEM environment; supports the mouse, multiple buffers and windows (up to four) and adds many word processing features (i.e. rulers).

765d: Calamus Fonts #8. DejaVodu, Choice Ten, Goudy Sorts, Pala, Pepita, Hari Extra Bold, Handwriting, Gismonda, Devil Chancery, Oregon Dry, Oregon Wet, Medusa. Also includes CDK that shows a reference chart of the Atari System font with corresponding asci numbers.

766: Utilities. V1.4 of Blitzschnell (drive defragmenter/optimizer with a unique visual twist!) BootKill (AUTO prg to rename all your AUTO prgs and DA's so they won't be loaded in.) CALLTIM3 (calls the US Naval Observatory and sets the computer's internal clock.) EXPANDER (acc converts from 320k SS disks to 720k DS disks in one operation.) LOCKCPX (prevent your HD being accessed.) ReNameIt (add lowercase and extended characters to your filenames.) RESET1_1 (Use CTRL-ALT-RS for cold start; CTRL-ALT-LS for warm start with this AUTO program.) SilkMouse 2.6a (rewritten to remove a bug and address a couple of compatibility issues.) SYSTEM (displays many system parameters including ram space, disk space, HD space, GDOS, Blitter. It will set floppy seek rate and do a few other nifty things.)

767d: B/Stat V2.43: B/STAT is a shareware graphics and statistical analysis program. It requires min 1 meg and a DS drive. It can use GDOS but does not require it.

New Disks for February 1993

#768D: Light Cycles

Written by James Busby (c) 1992, this game is Shareware! Anyone who has seen the film 'Tron' will need no explanation, but for the rest of you, here it is. Two opponents drive light cycles in an enclosed area. The bikes can turn in the vertical and horizontal directions, but can never stop. As they move, the cycles leave a colored trail behind them. The objective for each player is to force his/her/it's opponent to crash either by hitting a colored trail, or a wall or other obstacle. Simple! This game has been tested on STs with TOS 1.2, 1.4, and 1.62 successfully. *It will not work on TOS 1.0 STs. Sorry!*

769D: German Utilities

DIPS-This CPX will let you change the dip switches inside your Mega STe or TT. It's in German, but easy to understand.

READBOOT-Here is a neat German utility but you can certainly understand how to use a lot of the capabilities. This utility reads and reports how many directories you have online, fat content, flags, sectors, hidden sectors, cluster information and much more. It works in Mono/Color and TT modes.

RUBIK_EN-This is a neat screen saver (program is in English). Runs as a desk accessory. When it kicks in it divides your screen into squares, and starts moving them about. Like one of those sliding-block number puzzles. Lots of configuration options.

WINX20-This is a patch/hack program (sorry, no English docs) that allows up to 40 GEM windows to be opened instead of the normal 4-8. Supposed to work with ALL official TOS versions from 1.00 to 3.06 although GEnie Sysop was unable to operate this program under TOS 2.05.

FINDER-This utility helps you to find certain extenders or ones you put in yourself. This utility was done in GFA Basic 3.0. It works in Mono/Color and TT modes.

HDFREE-This file allows you to know how much free space you have on your hard drive and where. It is in German but actually relatively easy to understand.

HDINF1_0-This utility works in ST Medium or Hi rez. It will show you graphs, space, partition info and more. This is the prg and accessory version. Shareware by CE Software.

770D: FleaByte Accessories

Fleabyte accessories, by Henry K. van Eyken, are visible, on-screen calculators that can, if one wants them to, transfer information directly to other applications such as wordprocessors. The Wormhole accessories are invisible and can be made to work with data showing on the screen image of an application. Works with 1st Word Plus as well as Word-Writer and Word-Up. Fleabyte also works with WordPerfect when in monochrome. Fleabyte includes a set of four calculators of somewhat increasing complexity from one to the next:

FBSX-V2.1F-Fleabyte "Simplex" (SX) for ordinary arithmetic and with some elementary features of a financial calculator.

FBFF-V1.4-Fleabyte "Full-function" (FF) compares with today's hand-held, full-function scientific calculators.

FBSF-V1.3-Fleabyte "Significant figures" (SF) copes with uncertainties in numerical data. I am referring here to measurement uncertainties.

FBNS–V1.4–Fleabyte "Basic natural science" (NS) provides the above calculator with direct access to atomic weights and scientific constants.

WHSX_12.ACC–This demo demonstrates a fast way of obtaining statistical information about data entered on a word-processor.

AUTORAIS–AutoRaise is a small accessory that provides an alert box that lets you switch on/off an autoraise function that simulates a mouse click to pop up the window the mouse pointer is on.

771D: CoNnect

CoNnect (V1.60i) is a (German) terminal program for the ATARI ST/STE/TT series, which will run under (nearly) any resolution and operating system similar to the ATARI TOS. It emulates VT52, VT100, VT102/ANSI and VT220 Terminals. You can use this emulations on all serial and MIDI ports of your system. Being in VT100, Vt102 or VT220 Mode, you can configure CoNnect to allow TEK 4014 graphics emulation. In addition to its terminal features, you can use CoNnect under MiNT/MultiTOS to run shells and processes in CoNnects windows. Shareware (30 day test period).

772D: ST-Keep Bulletin Board System

This latest version of ST–Keep includes FidoNet compatibility via your favorite front–door and FIDOdoor. Configure up to 32000 rooms (SIGs for messages and files), 32000 messages per room, 32000 users, 32000 users, 255 floors, 255 access levels, 15 groups, unlimited on–line games (and other doors), VT–52/ANSI/IGS/BIG terminal emulation, Xmodem, Ymodem, Ymodem–G, Zmodem file transfers. Fully automated, configure it in less than 10 minutes and leave it alone for weeks! Total remote control for the SysOp. ST–Keep will run with only 512K RAM and a modem. A typical system will need less than 1 Megabyte of drive storage for its system files, and still runs on less than 300K RAM. Mono and color are supported, along with 9600 baud modems. Shareware.

773D: GEM View 2.01

GEMVIEW 2.01 GEM View is a sophisticated multi–window picture viewing and manipulation program. Can be use as a picture and file–shower for Multi–TOS. Runs under MultiGEM. Color and greyscale–dithering algorithms for 4, 8, 16, 64 and 256 colors. Supports MacPaint and PBM–Pictures. Supports ImageLab and JPEG–Images. Supports true–color BMP images. Processes true–color images. GEM–View runs on HC– and TC–graphic cards. Supports the follows picture formats: GVW, GIF, SUN, B&W, PAC, IFF, BMP, RLE, IMG, GEM, NEO, ART, PIx, PCx, TNx, DOO, SPU, SPC, .XBM, .PBM, PGM, PPM, MAC, and PCX. Identify pictures without loading the picture. You can quick zoom a picture two or four times. You can quick shrink picture (1/2, 1/4 and 1/8). Growing and shrinking the part of the picture around the position of the cursor. Clip images in all directions (also from down–right to up–left). Tone Scale Adjust (Grey intensity) can be chosen. The colors (RED, GREEN, BLUE) can be intensified or reduced. Runs as program (PRG, GTP) or as accessory (ACC). Shareware.

774D: OXYD-Color - 775D: OXYD-Mono

OXYD–Here is a HOT new game that is bound to keep you busy for hours on end. It has multi–levels with each level having its own unique puzzle. TT/ST/STe.

776D: MicroEMACS

MicroEMACS–Full Screen Text Editor, V3.10. MicroEMACS is a tool for creating and changing documents, programs, and other text files. It is both relatively easy for the novice to use, but also very powerful in the hands of an expert. MicroEMACS allows several files to be edited at the same time. The screen can be split into different windows, and text may be moved freely from one window to the next. MicroEMACS includes commands for string searching and replacing, paragraph reformatting and deleting, automatic word wrapping, word move and deletes, easy case controlling, and automatic word counts. For complex and repetitive editing tasks editing macros can be written. Note: Order #776D–A for a complete working version of MicroEMACS; order #776D–B for everything on A, but also including C source files (all files compressed.)

777D: Today, Ver 2.00

TODAY–a program to display events and information on a date in history. The TODAYS.PRG will bring together information from various text files, select and sort the information based on the system date of your computer, and print or display the information in a report. Data files are included for each month of the year.

778: Kid Programs (C)

FORUM36A–This is Tic–Tac–Toe where you have to get 4 in a row and not 3. The board has 36 squares. This game is fun and addicting. Great graphics, but no sound.... Color monitor required.

KID_GP–KID_GP! features colorful graphics and is playable by youngsters. Designed using the GP_GRAPHICS ENGINE available from DSA. (1 meg req.) Exceptional game!

PARLOR12–"Come into my parlor..." is a simple matching game with an insect theme. For ages 3–8. Insects included are the stinkbug, head louse, housefly, damselfly, ladybird beetle, leaf beetle, oriental cockroach, velvet ant, and yellowjacket. This program is presented as shareware for the benefit of the Leal School ST Fund.

YAMS–The game of Yams is a MineSweeper clone that runs in any resolution, on any ST/TT (as far as I know), and as a program or desk accessory in a GEM window. In short, you're in a yam garden and you want to pick all the yams that aren't infected by bugs, and do it as quickly as possible. Give this a try, but be forewarned: beta tests show that this game can be VERY addictive.

779: Megapede

Megapede, by the author of *Mrs. Munchie*, is a frantic version of the classic Centipede game. But in typical Robert Dytmire fashion, several new ideas to the game. Beta testers loved this game. Shareware by Robert Dytmire. (1 meg). Exceptional game!

780D: Utility Disk

EZBASE10–Easy Base is an easy–to–use database that can be adapted to most common tasks such as address lists, inventories, checkbooks, grocery lists, etc. Easy base runs on any ST in any resolution 640x200 or greater. (St medium, ST high, TT medium, etc. color or mono) Features include the usual database functions such as next/previous record, jump to start/end, search for string, etc. Easy base allows you to sort ascending or descending on any field, includes an autodialer function (Dial from any field), features built in math functions for automatically calculation of grocery lists or checkbook totals.

SPBT80–Super Boot V8.0–– Lets you select which desk accessories, auto programs, and DESKTOP.INF file to use. Set the date, time, write verify, and more. Lets you select GEM programs to autoboot. Use function keys to select commonly used sets of files. Password protection of your hard drive. Graphic Welcome Screen & digitized sound. NEW: Stereo DMA sound, control 10 times more files, now takes commandline parameters, reboot from Super Boot, much more.....

TERA_121–This is version 1.21 of TeraDesk, a replacement desktop from The Netherlands. Very much like Atari's NewDesk, but with a few added features. This will be of most interest to those running TOS 1.x machines. Program is in English.

TSH911G–TomShell, by Tom Clegg, is a command line interpreter for use with the Atari ST/Mega. Commands supported by TomShell: alias, author, cat, cd, cls, condence, cp, dir, echo, exit, help, history, input, interact, ls, mkdir, mv, ren, rm, rmdir, set, system, unalias, unset, verbatim, word. The following are batch file only commands: gosub, goto, if, ifv, resume, return, :label.

781D: Arcade Games (C)

RAYOID–a package offering three different types of game. Incredible graphics, fast, smooth, sound, Play over MODEM. RAYOID I is a personal adaptation of a well–known classic. The goal is to destroy asteroids before they destroy you. RAYOID II gets you against a human opponent in a fight where victory belongs to the most skillful of the two players. This mode gets you against a human opponent, linked by modem, in a battle of skills. Not TT compatible. Test TOS 1.0/1.4. Docs state should work STe. (Color only! One meg or more need for RAYOID II or III.

BLOX–Blox 2.0, Copyright (C) 1989–1992 by David Baggett. This program is shareware. Aside from good ol' addictive game play, Blox features: stunning art–deco graphics; crisp, quick animation; vibrant digitized sound, sampled at 11 kHz for better fidelity; crystal–clear sample playback on Hippo and ST Replay digitizers; mind–bending hexagon motif, with six rotations per game piece; cleverly selected skill levels; easy–to–use configuration program that checks your Blox directory for correctness (to ensure proper installation) and lets you set game options; and convenient hard drive support. Blox will run onany Atari ST or TT with a color monitor and a hard drive or DS floppy. It requires a minimum of 345K to run. The gameplay in Blox is simple: you place your pieces on the center structure to make rings. Complete rings disappear, causing the board to collapse in. You keep placing pieces until there's no more room on the board for a piece, at which point the game is over. Easy! The tricky part is that pieces come out from six different directions.

782: Utilities

ALICE–Another Little C Editor, V1.5, September 1992. This GEM–based text editor for ATARI ST ASCII–files was written by Ralf Kaufman. ALICE features: simultaneous editing of several texts in GEM windows, 10 additional texts may be held in cut/paste buffers; full mouse support; all menus are selectable by the keyboard; simple printing facilities; block operations (cut/paste) with up to 10 buffers; search and replace; runs on any ATARI ST/STE/TT with any TOS version. Docs included.

FECYPHER–This is a new version of "Cypher," a file encrypter from the United Kingdom. This version uses the "Front End" interface.

MANUAL10–Manualizer is a little utility which will take any standard ASCII text file and print it out on a Hewlett Packard Laserjet II compatible printer in the form of a manual. Automatically selects between standard font size and a small font size depending on whether the text file is formatted to 50 column or 80 column. Shareware from Mountain Software.

SDUMP1_5–Bob's Screen Dump Utility V 1.5 is designed for use with a EPSON Lq1500 or compatible printer (such as the Panasonic 1124). It will work in Medium or Low resolution and create a 16 shade dump of your screen when Alt–Help is pressed. This supercedes the Atari dump of only 8 shades (which doesn't take advantage of the 24 pins in your printer!). Shareware.

SEBRA–The High–Res Monochrome Monitor Emulator by Patrik Persson. SeBra allows the previously impossible: to run the high resolution (640x400) mode on a color monitor/TV set! It works with all ST/STe/Mega computers. Other small utilities try to do the same thing (MONOEMU5, GFA–MONO etc), but SeBra is faster, more compatible (they both have problems with the STe), takes advantage of a blitter chip (if you have one) and has lots of other nice options.

SYSINFO–SYSINFO 1.30 (Aug 1992) This program shows the hard– and software functions of the Atari ST computers and many options for programers. SYSINFO runs with all ROM– and RAMTOS versions, in all graphics resolutions (mono/color). Also as program or accessory. Shows total, used and free memory in KB, provides drive information, installed CPU (68000, 68010, 68020, 68030, 68040), installed FPU (68881, 68882, 81/82, 68040), processor speed in percent (100% = 8MHz), state of default interface for output. If blitter and/or cache memory are installed, you can push either on or off. You can switch the corner clock on or off. Programmer functions: system, vector, graphic, cookie, and XBRA.

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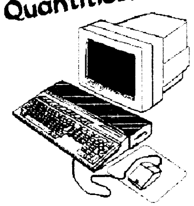

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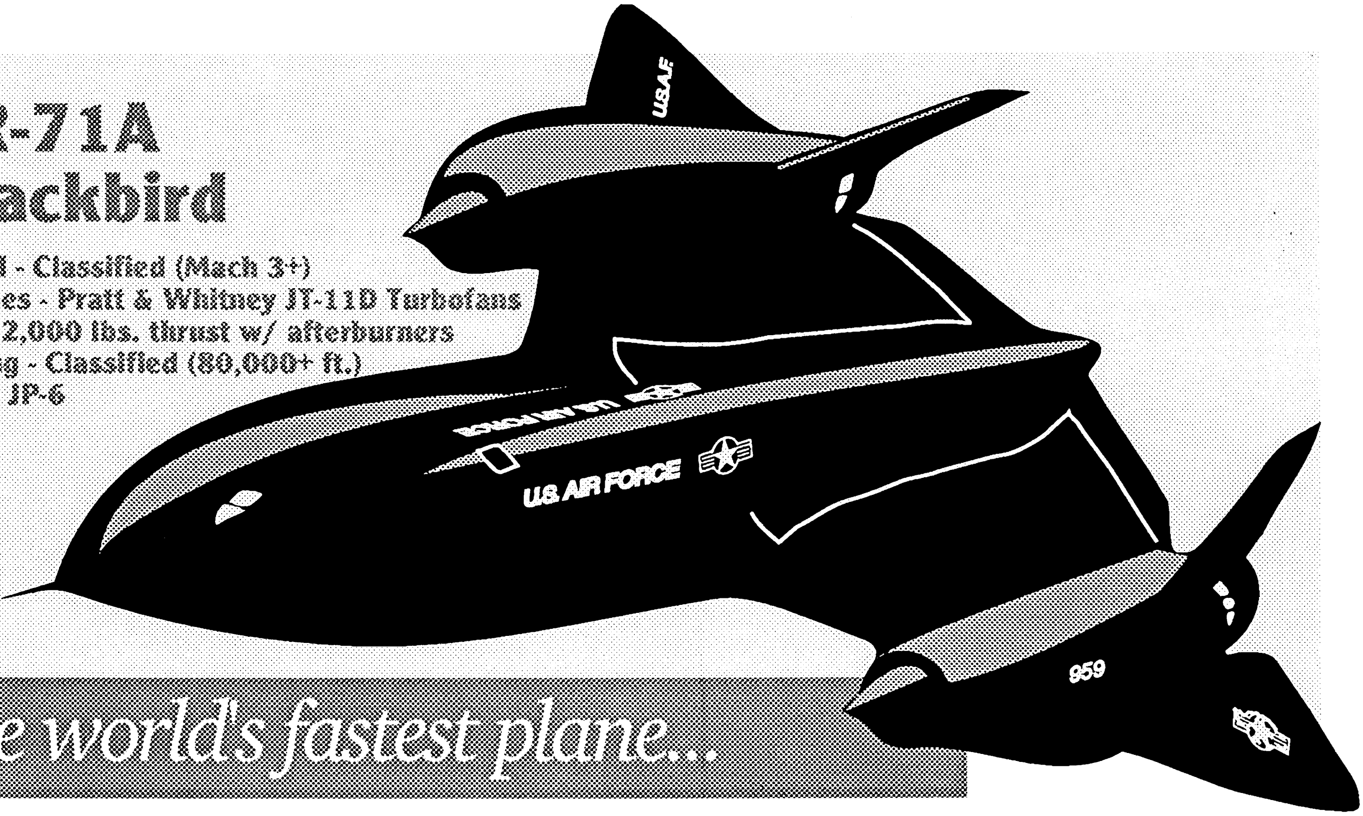

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